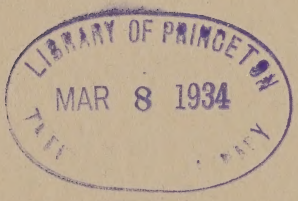
The Coming Revival Of Religion

Allyn King Foster



Foster, Allyn King, 1868-
The coming revival of
religion

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THE COMING REVIVAL OF RELIGION

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THE COMING REVIVAL OF RELIGION

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By ALLYN K. FOSTER

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To
E. H. F. F.
Whose Mind Has Enriched Me
Through Many Years
And Whose Spirit Has Abetted
My Every Endeavor
This Little Book Is Inscribed
By The Author

PREFACE

I HAVE been copiously advised to adopt some other title for this book, but I am calling it *The Coming Revival,* because that says what I mean, and because I am eager to preserve this ancient word for religion in spite of its bad associations, as it remains in good standing in the fields of art and letters. My only serious question was whether to say the "Coming Revival" or the "Present Revival," for I think the evidence of a new spirit in religion is present on every hand.

If I have spoken rather too frequently of students, I have not meant to confine my words to them, but rather to point out that the interest in vital religion today is deepest on the highest levels of our intellectual life. The coming revival has already begun among the intelligentsia to a significant degree, and an expression of that interest only awaits a statement of religion which modern-minded people can understand. By a curious regression, Christianity, if we may judge by some of its leaders, has been trying to live up to its past, when the precise thing it needs is to outlive a great deal of it. Thoughtful men have been made to feel that the incidentals of

Christianity are its fundamentals. When we separate the wheat from the tares, we shall find no more stanch supporters of religion than the very men whose studies have destroyed some of our cherished views. Nothing really has been destroyed by modern investigation except faulty views, and since science has furnished us with plenty of material for a larger statement of religion, we need not mourn forever the loss of those views.

I have seemed to drag in the illustration from Browning in the last chapter because I wanted to show that the process of a well-known spiritual experience is quite like the process by which we attain a religious experience. Process is a word to conjure with these days. People want to know the mechanisms of things in this mechanistic day, and I have merely sought to show the simple steps by which an experience is usually gained.

THE AUTHOR.

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I

INCITEMENTS

The world is sick. By this time everybody knows it, for no fact has been so persistently advertised. The nervous, moral, and spiritual breakdown of Western civilization brought on the violent convulsion of the war, and all the doctors agree that the collapse of the patient is complete. But that is not the only thing on which the physicians are unanimous. The most striking fact in the situation is that all the doctors, of every stripe, old school, new school, and quack, absolutely agree as to the treatment necessary. They declare without a dissenting voice, that the heart of mankind needs renewal, that the physical organs are sound though depleted, and that what is needed is red blood brewed in a healthy heart that will send rich streams of vitality to the extremities.

Leaving the figure of speech, the most arresting fact, emerging in the last ten years, is the unanimous judgment of all the critics that what our world needs above all else is religion. What they obviously mean by religion is a sort of spiritual vitality that shall renovate, recreate, and transform all physical and mental activities. What Bergson said shortly after the war began is what they have in mind. In his lecture on the meaning of the war, Bergson explained the occurrence of the World War by saying that

science had immensely extended man's physical and mental capacities, but that man had not grown a soul adequate to control these. Much is gained when the seat of a malady is known. Correct diagnosis is three-fourths of the cure. All the specialists declare that the world is afflicted with soul trouble, and this single fact is the most amazing phenomenon in modern life. Humanity stands anemic at the door of the Institution of Religion, as its last resort, asking: "Can you do anything for me? Is there balm in Gilead?" The destiny of both humanity and religion wait upon the answer.

Here is the sole condition necessary for that renaissance of vital religion to which we have been incited from all quarters during the past few years. It is really remarkable to note the varying voices that have been calling to the church to "stand and deliver." Immediately at the close of the late war the prime ministers of the British Empire uttered a manifesto in which they declared that what was needed to mend a broken world is religion. Time and again from high places in the political world the sentiment has been reiterated. One of the last published utterances of President Wilson emphasized the fact that economic and political reconstruction rests definitely upon humanity's inner renewal. I suppose that no generation ever so frankly accepted the diagnosis of its own condition as this one. We seem to know that something is wrong with our hearts, with those sources of our being that must be kept furnished and flowing if individual and group life is to be lived richly and effectively. "Spiritual

renewal " is almost the slogan of all creative thinkers in every field today. It is the text of all that Count Keyserling has written. The Western world with its clatter of activities is called by this philosopher to consider the contemplative life of the East, and his appeal is epitomized in his own definition of prayer, " the opening of the soul to the influences awaiting liberation in the innermost depths of the spirit, which when liberated, connect the soul directly with God."

The later writings of H. G. Wells, in his consciousness of that " great big Thing out there," reveal a heart-searching and a sense of spiritual need not always hitherto found in his utterances. These are significant words coming from such a source as H. G. Wells:

> At times in the silence of the night and in rare lonely moments I come upon a sort of communion of myself and something great that is not myself. It is perhaps poverty of mind and language which obliges me to say that this universal scheme takes on the effect of a sympathetic Person, and my communion a quality of fearless worship. These moments happen, and they are the supreme fact of my religious life to me; they are the crown of my religious experience.

Even Bernard Shaw, that scoffer-in-chief of our generation, long ago advised civilization to try the method of Jesus. From every quarter the challenge comes to the institutions of religion to bestir themselves to make good their claim to be dispensers of divine power. In all this, one thing is quite clear, namely, that power is the sole end sought. Nothing

else counts. It matters not how old the institution, how venerable its traditions, how correct its thinking as embodied in its creeds, how respectable its following in past or present, unless it can furnish vitality to an age spiritually enfeebled, its claim to sanctity will receive rough handling. "Why sing, 'All hail the power of Jesus' name,'" one is likely to hear, "if that power is not communicable?" It is a stern ultimatum that is handed, not too respectfully, to the church of today. It sounds startlingly like "Jesus or Barabbas!" It is certain that no subterfuge can avail, that no mere incidental will even be discussed. Religion must release its energy to mankind or it must abdicate! It matters not how long the apostolic pipe, if it brings no water of life. No amount of ecclesiastical plumbing will avail if there be no heat!

In my judgment all this is the most glorious thing that has happened to religion for a long time. All the criticism poured upon established religion, during or since the war, carries immense compliment and comfort. People do not appeal to a dead institution. To be roundly chastised for its failures is bad enough, but if this age passed by the church as a decadent, effete institution, that would be the tragedy. Under all the wave of judgment that has passed over the church in these later days there is the evident implication that there is still much vitality left in the body. Books like Professor Elwood's, like Professor Pupin's *The New Reformation*, have been written on the reconstruction of religion, and there is scarcely a current magazine

that does not in some article offer a new diagnosis or propose a new method of resuscitation. All this means that even in the minds of its sharpest critics the church is not dead, that it can still be made to function, and often beneath the forbidding scowl of the critic there is the wistful hope that the great sources of its re-creating power may again be opened.

Among the most penetrating utterances on the subject were those of Mr. Glenn Frank, a few years ago, in the *Century Magazine* of which he was then the editor. His "Fourteen Points," looking to the new reformation of religion, and his valedictory articles on "The Outlook for Western Civilization," ought to be put into a volume and be read by every lover of church and country. Take two of the fourteen points only, and see how they reach the nerve and possibly start the fur rising. The first is this, "to substitute the religion of Jesus for Christianity." See what is implied in that! Our present-day Christianity is not Christian? That is the plain meaning, and instead of bringing us to our feet with clenched fists it ought to bring us to our knees. How wonderful and how divinely simple it sounds as Jesus says to the woman at the well: "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." And what have we done with this Source of living water springing up into everlasting life? Bricked it over, walled it about, fashioned all sorts of complicated pipes and conduits that have often retarded the flow

and threatened to choke the very well itself. Our rituals, our institutions, our theologies, our sacraments, our traditions, all designed to facilitate the flow—have they always served effectively to turn a stream of healing energy upon mankind? There are many who say that in the house of God there is no singing of flowing water but the mockery of empty pipes.

Professor Cassius M. Keyser, the great mathematician of Columbia, says that theology is the queen of all the sciences, and since it generalizes upon all known science, it *is;* but what particular irrigating streams have the last ten years of theological controversy released? Is there a finer brotherhood within and without the church as a result of this sharp and costly debate? Ask any man who knows the conditions in almost any church, Catholic, Protestant, Christian Science, or what you will, and they will tell you that in the fight over our "infallibilities" and our orthodoxies, the work for which Christ lived and died has suffered enormously all over the world. It looks as though the religion of Jesus needed to be substituted for some forms of Christianity. These are not pleasant facts, but if the church is to become a more living force in the world, the probe must go deep. That is Mr. Frank's thought.

And the other of the Fourteen Points is this: Instead of attacking scientific hypotheses, the church ought to utilize the findings of science for religion and for civilization. What a topic is here! Suffice it to say that if this advice had been heeded ten years

ago, the Christian church might have avoided the disgraceful situation in which it found itself just after the war—fighting a theological civil war while a broken world called vainly for its healing!

The business of science is to reveal the processes of nature. It is concerned with the way force acts, the tracks along which it runs. Its search is for the way nature works, its mechanics so to speak, how this part plays into that, to the end of the activity, whether it be a chemical reaction in a test-tube, or the course of a comet through space. It is perfectly natural therefore that the philosophy of a fact-finding scientist should be mechanistic. His attention almost exclusively is directed to the interlocking mechanisms of nature, and he rarely concerns himself with the questions involved in the meanings of those mechanisms. To him nature is a machine running in regular order, and he does not usually concern himself with such questions as "Who invented the machine?" "What did he invent it for?" "What will be the end of it?" and so forth.

The scientist will tell you frankly that such questions belong to the philosopher or to the theologian, but that does not prevent him from erecting hypotheses around the facts that he knows to aid him in further investigations. What is to be noted, however, is that science has made great advances also in the study of mental and spiritual mechanisms, that is, how mind works, and how what we call spirit or personality works, and while no complete statement can yet be made as to how these three areas of man's nature, body, mind, and personality, interlock and in-

terplay, yet it is certain that an immense amount of scientific material is now available for both culture and religion. Our whole system of education has been reconstructed on the basis of the findings of psychology, and it can easily be shown that both ethics and religion have found firmer foundations upon many structural facts in all the sciences.

When therefore we speak of the laws of nature, we must now think of nature as a whole, on all its levels of matter, mind, and spirit. Human nature, with all its activities, is the one outstanding fact of nature, and must be included in any adequate study of science. George John Romanes said some years ago that he had found that in his study of nature he had left out the most important part of nature, which is human nature. It is inconceivable that in all the vast exploration of nature in these later days, no facts that minister to the culture of the human spirit have been discovered. As a matter of fact, the teachers of religion are often ignorant of the vast riches which science has turned up for them. Here again religion must plead to the indictment of neglecting the materials with which a cleaner altar fire might have been kindled, and of entering the lists unarmed to fight fully equipped warriors over scientific hypotheses which in the nature of things could neither be proved nor disproved. The last ten years have amply shown the futility of such procedure, and one who has been in the thick of the controversy during this period can well believe that a soberer mind prevails among the intelligent leaders of all shades of theological belief. Of course preachers,

alas, too many of them, will go on demolishing evolution weekly and weakly, but for those who know enough science to have a right to a judgment, and who have enough sound religion for ordinary decent living, the fight is over. They now see that evolution is at most but a process of creation, and that they win whether it be proved or disproved.

I think we may pass by the shallow atheisms, both scientific and quasi-philosophical, as conclusions based upon specialized data and not reckoning with all the scientific facts available, and I am sure that all that tide of New Mercurial cynicism is but a temporary reverberation of the more serious criticisms of religion. Not that these forms of unbelief and irreverence for established religion have not had a devastating effect upon the faith of countless people, particularly the young who are beginning to think for themselves; quite the reverse, for the literature of these cults of unbelief is widely distributed especially among college students, and it has produced in many places a bored, blasé attitude which does not reach the level of intellectual respectability, or even of honest agosticism. All that attitude toward idealism, toward religion, toward traditions and conventionality, which says so plainly, "Why be bothered?" is so flimsily based, that it will correct itself in the presence of the sobering realities of thought and of life. Meanwhile the situation is serious and must be dealt with.

It will not do to meet scorn with scorn. If we can see in this attitude of cynicism the mask of a real spiritual hunger, and can bring to those who

maintain it the old realities of the spirit in language which they can understand, there is every hope of a healthful change. Here is the real incitement. In the place of the discarded timbers with which cynicism has built a house for man to live in, can we build for him a house of faith constructed of clean, strong timbers that will defy decay? Religion is not dead, it is moving into a larger house, and the plans of this house are beginning to reveal cosmic dimensions. In the main I think that the most telling criticisms of religion are the friendliest, and they furnish both stimulus and encouragement to a richer spiritual life.

> There has never been a time [writes Mr. Frank] when men were so spiritually hungry as they are today. This is not an irreligious age. Only the superficial observer will pass such a judgment upon it. Men are hungry for spiritual leadership. Men are interested as never before in the mystery and the mastery of life. They want light on the mystery of life and leadership in the mastery of life.

This is not an irreligious age. It is merely bewildered, and has grown dry and intellectualistic for want of adequate interpretation. The church has not helped the situation by adding to this dry intellectualism a fierce discussion of its theological tenets. The religious leadership our generation needs right now is a leadership that will draw men away from the intellectual aspects of religion as ends in themselves, to the practical business of every-day living as Jesus lived and taught. The religion that Jesus taught is essentially inductive. It begins with experiment and ends with theory just as science does.

"If any man willeth to do God's will he shall know of the doctrine." Tragically enough we have reversed this process and have given to this generation the impression that we care more for correct views than for anything else. This age will respond to the proclamation of a vital faith, a faith into which men have lived.

II

THE COMING REVIVAL

Judged by the amount of printed space occupied by the discussion of religious subjects, it would seem that nothing interests the present generation quite so much as religion. The daily newspaper has undergone a remarkable change within a very few years, and it is rare not to find at least a paragraph or two devoted to some form of religious interest. The magazines are carrying much more on this subject, I suspect, than ever before. Religion seems to be good copy. Think of the array of novels dealing with the religious motif in the last quarter century. There is a deluge of them, and this is a new thing under the sun. It is a far cry to Mrs. Humphrey Ward and *Robert Elsmere.* Then the religious novel was a rare thing, and to criticize the church was almost indelicate; but today! surely the climate has undergone a radical change to produce such a crop of fiction. Then came *Elmer Gantry,* and the bottom was struck. From top to bottom religion has been the most popular interest for the novelist. From the zenith where Mrs. Ward treated of the intellectual reconstruction of religion, to the nadir of Sinclair Lewis' frank and fleshly self-revelation, the church has been handled in every possible way. The immense audience which all this literature com-

mands is the first item in the survey of religious interest in our time. People do read these things, and if by good fortune a real prophet should arrive, the stage is all set for his appearance and the auditors already in their places.

On this confessedly indeterminate background of popular religious interest, I want in this chapter to place some reasons for a profound conviction that has deepened in the last few years. That conviction is that we are on the verge of the greatest revival of interest in personal religion that we have known in a half century. This is not a mere academic judgment, it is born of intimate contact with the thought and feeling of a very large group of people covering a wide area in this country. The reader may permit me to explain that for nine years I have given my entire time to visiting schools, colleges, and universities in the effort to interpret religion, and that the prosecution of this task has sent me into every State in America. I have not been confined to any one group of institutions, but under the interpretation of a very liberal denominational board my field has lain among State universities and schools and colleges of all sorts. The most significant opportunity has come from invitations to speak in classrooms where I have sought to approach the realities of religion by the methods pursued in teaching the varying subjects involved, and by piecing the parts of truth together to show that they belong to the same whole. This is what I call interpretation. Add to this innumerable conferences with students and teachers, the bombardment of questionnaires, and

the pugilism of radical clubs, and you will see that I have had an exceptional opportunity to learn the state of mind and of heart of a most important section of Americans.

Realizing as I do that this is the most bewildered age intellectually, morally, and religiously ever known, still the conviction has steadily grown that deep under all the bewilderment and moral anarchy, are sensitive surfaces still unbrutalized and a poignant spiritual hunger. I believe absolutely that the right kind of gospel, couched in intelligible terms, unfettered by unnecessary implications, and yet unemasculated by the distillations of rationalism, will make just now an unexampled appeal to the intellect as to the heart of the most thoughtful in our midst. If we can release the religion of Jesus to which all the critics of Christianity are appealing, if we can tear out the brickwork and the plumbing from the well of Living Water, all the fainting growths in individual and group life will look up and in due season bring forth their thirty or sixty or hundredfold. I realize perfectly that what is meant by the "religion of Jesus" can never be defined, for the very good reason that spiritual things, like love, life, energy, thought, beauty, religion, have indeterminate edges and do not yield to definition; yet all these things are continuously experienced, and if contact with Christ can really be effected, we shall surely know by experience what his religion is. Have we not had, in all our study of reality, enough of what Carlyle calls attorney logic? Must we forever be seeking the melody in the

strings, or the symphony in the instruments? Is not Albert Schweitzer right when he says, "It is not Jesus as historically known, but Jesus arisen within the heart that is significant for our time?" The new renaissance of religion will witness men possessed of a new spirit which was not learned by logic, but caught from a Living Person. If we can make Jesus Christ a living influence, as Galen, Aristotle, and Plato were (and are) living influences long after their earthly career was ended, it is not idle to hope that by the same method His great spirit can be again called from the vasty deep and made operative in human society.

There are, however, more specific reasons which have bred the conviction of a coming revival of vital religion. Historically the temper of our time much resembles that of the great ages of spiritual renaissance. The universe of the spirit like the material universe, is held in its course by opposite pressures. Nature tends ever to keep things in balance. When one force becomes predominant, the opposite force keeps it in check. Our planet, for example, preserves its integrity of mass and keeps to its orbit by the harmonious interplay of centrifugal and centripetal forces. Likewise when the spirit of a generation bulges too far on one side it evokes a counter pressure that brings it back into shape. The wonderful thirteenth century, with all its great creativity, was like to be swamped in materialism, and then arose Francis of Assisi. The cloud no bigger than a man's hand suddenly grew until it watered a thirsty world. The fourteenth century that saw the Babylonian

Captivity of the church, a century of religious, economic, and political anarchy, produced the *Theologia Germanica*, Tauler, and the Mystics. The Protestant Reformation, whatever it soon became, had its rise in an inner spiritual experience in the face of a brutal order of things in Church and State. The hard intellectualism and moral nihilism of the eighteenth century produced the Wesleys and Whitefield. Our age presents the same polar aspects. On the one side there is a wide-spread intellectualism, often dry and juiceless, that admits no realities that may not be measured by some material standard, and on the other a revival of interest in mysticism.

I think the interest in mysticism is one of the most striking phenomena on our horizon at the moment. The word mysticism has a dubious connotation; it has gathered under its ægis both saints and freaks, and one is tempted at the mention of it to refer the whole matter to the department of abnormal psychology, but names like Baron von Hügel, Evelyn Underhill, Rufus Jones, and W. E. Hocking must give us pause. These thinkers are too intellectually respectable to be classed offhand as queer. Here then as everywhere, you cannot bring an indictment against a whole people. There must be discrimination, and we do well to ask what the heart of this movement of mysticism really is. When we read of the strange experiences which some of the extreme mystics report—visions, miracles, cures, and all the rest—we may well be incredulous; but often in these same individuals, accompanying fantastic claims, there was a singular beauty of spir-

itual life, a contagious atmosphere of power which infected all who came within range of it, and a moral heroism that is always the prime test of communion with God.

Mysticism at heart is an energy phenomenon. Its index is power. Modern science is telling us that that is what every phenomenon in nature is. A chemical molecule is the result of the energy interplay of two or more different kinds of atoms, in their proper proportions. When a molecule is formed, something new takes place besides the dead union of component parts. A drop of water is not merely the combination of hydrogen and oxygen—it is a transformation due to the interchange of energies in these two gases. The green plant storing up sunshine in neat chemical parcels for its future uses, combustion in living lungs, thought even if reduced to chemical changes in the brain, feeling, that most mysterious of all human experiences, are all energy interchanges, and all, in the broad sense of the term, mystical in their nature. Digestion is the process of releasing the energies of food for combination with the energies of the body; thought is a similar digestive process by which from sensations new energy patterns are formed in the mind; and religion, by processes no more mysterious than the other two, is the outreach of man for the energies available for his spirit. I do not wish to strain an ancient word that has very definite connotations, but is it not true that all energy interchanges with their accompanying transformations, whether molecules, species, or ideas, are in a high

degree both mystical and mysterious? The fact that I am calling attention to, however, is that, on whatever theory, so many of the most thoughtful people of our time are studying the whole movement of mysticism as a clue to the sources of divine power in men's souls. Always in the past it has been a mystic, whether classified or not, who has recalled his generation to God. Our day awaits a Madame Guyon, a Tauler, or a Saint Francis.

An important fact in the intellectual situation that promises much for the venture of religion is the fact that there is no convincing form of infidelity on the scene. In a former century great universal minds like Hume and Kant could generalize upon the sum of known science with disturbing effect upon faith, but in these days knowledge has grown to such enormous proportions that no adequate synthesis has yet appeared. Even a provisional synthesis is only now being discussed, and it will be some time before we shall have a cosmic philosophy or a cosmic religion. Think of the expansion of such sciences as chemistry, physics, biology, psychology, sociology, and many others in these last days. Specialists in these fields tell us that no one man can compass all the possibilities of any one of them. It would indeed be a large brain that could in these days deserve the title of Doctor Universalis. As a matter of fact the most disturbing philosophies of denial are based upon special sections of scientific findings, and these will be moderated or disposed of when a real synthetic philosophy arrives, and that is precisely what we lack in the present state of affairs.

Biology, physics, chemistry, psychology, and the *enfant terrible* of the new sciences, sociology, have each had its fling at faith, but one has the feeling that each is basing its conclusions on insufficient data, and without reference to the findings in the others. Natural science badly needs philosophers who not only know the facts but the meanings of them. Atheism and agnosticism are still with us, to be sure, but they are both negative, and in spite of considerable noise, everybody knows that conquests are not made on strategies of despair. Honest atheists and agnostics are not usually propagandists. Being honest, they find no joy in a lost God and in the absence of knowledge. Much in these forms of unbelief, I am persuaded, is due to the fact that men have thought their way out of old forms of belief and have not yet been furnished with adequate forms. This is the supreme intellectual task that confronts us just now, namely, to find a vocabulary for the things of the spirit that has in it the dimensions of our present-day universe. In all other fields of reality a working vocabulary has already been found. The failure of religion is that it often speaks in an unknown tongue.

The way is further opened to a new interest in religion by another fact that I think is indubitable. The so-called warfare between science and religion is greatly quieted. Of course there has never been a conflict between the orderly realities of science and the equally orderly realities of religion. Both are realms of experience, and one is as valid as the other. The behavior of falling bodies and the in-

fluence of prayer upon a human life are both definite experiences, but the difficulty has been to state one experience in terms of the other. With such diverse realities as those occurring all the time in the spheres of matter, mind, and spirit, the problem has been to include them all in one system, to think of them all as parts of one great whole. The scientist who knows little of religion, and the theologian, amateur or professional, who has no adequate training in science, are equally responsible for the thick confusion that has prevailed. A good deal has been said in these days of the hard-shell fundamentalist who refuses to accept the findings and methods of science, but we shall not have the whole truth until we recognize that there is a large group of fundamentalist scientists who are quite as obdurate in refusing to pay the price necessary to understand the nature of religion. Scientists can be as dogmatic and as intolerant as theologians, and not a little of the popular misconception as to the relation of science to religion must be laid at the door of scientific teaching both high-handed and undiscriminating. If theologians are ignorant of the facts of science, and they often are, it is equally true that scientists can be woefully ignorant of religious matters.

In a recent volume summing up the accomplishments of sociology, written by well-known specialists, I find references to religion that do no credit either to the scholarship or the good manners of the critics. To dismiss the religion of Jesus by a sneering reference to the Jonah or creation story is

at best but poor logic. One might rail at modern chemistry because of the superstitions of alchemy, or at astronomy because of the charlatanry of astrology, with equal force. For a long time now it has been an open season for theology. Anybody with any kind of a weapon from a pea-shooter to a shotgun could blaze away at theology whenever the mood struck him, and there was no gamekeeper in sight. I recall hearing a well-known scientist begin a speech by saying, "I know nothing about theology," and then proceed to dictate terms to theology. What is often forgotten is that theology is one of the most difficult and exacting of all the sciences, and when the scientist matriculates in theology and the theologian matriculates in science, there will be a better mutual understanding.

The wide-spread discussions of fundamentalism and modernism, so rampant and ruinous during the past ten years or so, are symptoms of a changing intellectual order. Religion has been trying to learn a new language, and that is always difficult. It is so much easier to talk of known realities in the vernacular. The vocabulary of religion is ancient and honorable, the legacy of the great minds of the past, and what is often overlooked by extremists, much of it is absolutely adequate for the subject-matter which it carries. There were giants in those days, and much of their work will remain classic to the end. In learning a new language therefore we do not cancel the old. The two must so supplement each other that more truth becomes intelligible. Now revelation properly deals with spiritual reality; science, with natural

reality. Revelation interprets nature in terms of the spiritual; natural science reverses the process and interprets spiritual things in terms of the natural. No revelation ever had for its purpose the teaching of the facts of nature. It merely utilizes the facts of nature at its disposal to further its spiritual utterances. It is folly on the very face of it either to discredit the spiritual utterances because of a flaw in their scientific framework, or to deny the plain discoveries of science because they are at variance with this framework. Both revelation and science have come down to us interwoven with human fallacy. The facts of nature were not fully known to those who brought us revelation, and consequently a correction of those facts was accomplished by science. But the spiritual revelation remains unaffected by it all.

Science has often had to correct its false assumptions, but its facts remained intact. About the year 1800 the orthodox theory of phlogiston prevailed in chemistry, a theory which declared that a substance called phlogiston existed in all matter which emerged as flame when combustion took place. That theory is quite exploded now, but combustion and flame still continue as the regular order of nature. Theologies and scientific theories are man's loose imaginative containers in which he puts his universe, and if those containers fail, the universe keeps right on without missing a stroke, as it unfolds its varied phenomena on all its levels of creation, material, mental, and spiritual. When it was reported to Thomas Carlyle that a distinguished woman had

said, "I accept the universe," the blunt Scotsman remarked, "Egad! She'd better!"

Our knowledge of the universe is constantly slipping its center of gravity, and it takes us some time to get adjusted to the new order of things. We have been passing through exactly the same condition that confronted the world in the years following 1543 when the Copernican astronomy was published. It took a century and a half to get used to the new center of our solar system in the sun. Later when the discoveries of science reached their climax in Newton's laws of gravitation, a further and violent adjustment had to be made. It is often forgotten that a new discovery in science has to meet first and most fiercely the opposition of the orthodox scientists, before the fundamentalist theologian begins to attack it. Popular clamor is always a "hangover" from previous closed discussions. Henry Smith Williams reports that a group of philosophers in Newton's time protested against his laws of gravitation as contrary to the teachings of Holy Writ.

Infinitely more new knowledge has had to be absorbed in the last century than in all the most revolutionary periods in the history of science. Since 1859 discovery has followed discovery until the scientific men themselves are bewildered. Gathering up these discoveries into provisional hypotheses science has gone on discovering new and vast areas, hitherto unexplored, until it has come to pass that even a provisional synthesis of the facts of nature seems well-nigh impossible. In the absence of such a complete synthesis of the universe, these provisional

hypotheses have in turn taken the center of the stage. There was nothing else to do. A hypothesis is both the summing up and the prophecy of a given specialism. It tells the facts already discovered, and it predicts the location of new facts. For the moment nothing else exists for the specialist but his specialism. He must be dogmatic, narrowing down his investigation within working dimensions. Science has ever advanced through a succession of provisional dogmatisms.

Now it is precisely these provisional dogmatisms that are giving trouble to religious thinking in these days. Biology, physics, chemistry, psychology, each in its turn has offered an exclusive explanation of all spiritual and mental facts, and hence we have much of mechanism, behaviorism, the physico-chemical basis of life, and many other disturbing philosophies. Man is the most delicate and complicated mechanism in all nature. Impulses come to him through a thousand approaches, and within the human body science has studied the tracks along which such impulses run. For the moment all human behavior seems purely mechanical, but the telegraph and the radio are mechanisms also, and nobody confuses these with the messages that come over them. A mechanism is a carrier of something, and what it carries is the important thing. Science is ever prone to worship the god Process, when what is "processed," so to speak, should be the ultimate object of search. A washing-machine is meaningless without the clothes that go through it. For well-informed people, much of the brush has been removed from the road to religious

reality. We have followed so many by-paths that led to the jungle, that the main road has been obscured. Both science and religion have been so often identified with falsities that we hardly know what science is or what religion is. I need not go into the matter, but it would be interesting to ask a score of competent scientists what the legitimate field of science is. Surely Mr. Bertrand Russell and Sir Oliver Lodge would not agree. Similarly, if you ask a group of theologians what religion is, there would be the same disparity of view. Science is certainly not merely a set of "hard" facts enclosed in an equally hard logic, nor is religion merely a set of "beliefs." If both deal with real experience there must be some point at which they are essentially the same. If we can find that point we shall be far on our way to a scientific statement of religion, and the adventure of religion like the adventure of science will become a challenging search for the resources of the universe.

It is sometimes said that religion and science are two games played on the same board. But the mere board possesses no magic competent to unify two wholly different games. You cannot play checkers by the rules of chess. This is not a very clever way of repeating the old fallacy of the Middle Ages, that there are "truths of grace" and "truths of nature." Mischief enough has already been done by this stratagem. Unless there is identity of process, there can be no unity, and moreover, it is a violation of the very spirit of science to assume that two different spheres of experience cannot in essential respects be

made intelligible to each other. The function of gills and the function of prayer are as wide apart as are biology and theology, but in one essential particular they are distinctly one. Both gills in a fish and prayer in a man are "mechanisms" for the appropriation of energy; in the one case it is oxygen necessary to the life of the fish, in the other it is a no more mysterious spiritual power necessary to the higher life of the man. That both do appropriate power nobody questions. The advantage is with the fish, of course, because oxygen gas was discovered by Priestley, and, to date, no scientist has found a physical container for spiritual power. But the mystery and the reality are in the energy, not in a container of energy such as oxygen.

No, science and religion are one in process. Both work the same way. We must here go to the scientist for method and for language if the matter is to become intelligible. Now the source of all material phenomena is energy. Herbert Spencer, over a half-century ago, called this energy out of which all nature and man with all his experiences have emerged, the "Unknowable." John Fiske called it "God, the Source of Phenomena." The atom which is the working unit of this energy is not a hard mass, but a nicely balanced system of positive and negative forces in varying proportions. The ninety-odd chemical elements are explained by scientists as due to varying charges of these positive and negative energies in their respective atoms. These elements combine, that is, exchange their energies, in infinite varieties of combination to make a visible

universe. All matter, therefore, is an energy phenomenon. Why this interchange of energies results in the various substances with which we are familiar, science does not know. Why a positive proton with one negative electron should produce hydrogen with its distinct properties, and why a similiar proton with two electrons should produce helium with a distinctly different set of properties, is part of the inscrutable mystery. All that science knows is that it is so because it is so, and as we have always suspected, a woman's reason is entirely scientific. Of course this is very techincal matter as the scientist would explain it, and much of it problematical, and of course no layman can talk extensively about it, but this energy theory lies at the basis of all modern science, and if we are ever to approach religion in the scientific spirit the elements at least of the new physics must be grasped. Science then may be described as the forms or patterns which creative energy takes and which creative energy sustains in a universe ceaselessly in motion. These forms are observed to increase in complexity as we ascend the scale of nature. In the inorganic world, that is, the world below life, combinations of atoms create more complicated substances; in the living world the earliest organisms are simple, the later, more complex. In all this energy interchange new things are appearing all the time, so that nature is continuously creative. Everything in nature, from the biggest nebula in the sky to the tiniest atom, from the lowliest plant or animal to man, is created by and lives, moves, and has its being in this great, all-enveloping

Cosmic Energy. For every created thing, animate or inanimate, there is energy available.

Now man is nature's most complex and most delicately balanced of all her creations. Being the product of creative energy he, too, is sustained by the same energy. He too lives and moves and has his being in this all-enveloping energy. His body is a set of mechanisms, like breathing and digestion, adapted to the appropriation of energy. His mind, whatever and wherever it is located, takes in through the open windows of his senses the energies of light, of sound, of touch, and many others, stores them up and frames them into what we call thoughts. But man is something more than body and mind—he can feel, he can interpret, he can aspire, in short, he has something which gathers up his bodily and mental processes, and makes his self, his personality, his soul; and religion like science, merely says that there is energy available for this spirit. Bodily and mental sensations do affect that self of his, and man began to find that out at the very start of his career. Through all his blind gropings man was searching for the energies available for his spirit, his self. His superstitions, like the superstitions that beclouded science in its march toward the light, only mark the stages of his advance toward a law of the spirit of life. Science tells us that all existence, living and non-living, is adjustment to environment. That adjustment makes the energies of our universe available. Planets are kept in their orbits, continents rise out of the sea or disappear again, crystals do their marvelous experiments in geometry, sunsets

sing symphonies of color, plants and animals accomplish their careers, and man lives on all the levels of his life by adjustment to the streaming creative energies everywhere active. Religion, I repeat, is man's adjustment to the spiritual energies out of which his spiritual nature arose, and which are the pledge of his sustaining and advance.

A mechanistic scientist would call all this the play of natural forces, but man's spirit is as "natural" as his body. Moreover, natural forces capable of sustaining personality must somehow and somewhere lead to a cosmic personality, or else, you have forces creating something bigger than themselves. Other scientists not tied to a partisan hypothesis, and most of the rest of us ordinary people, do not hesitate to believe that all this means God, Maker of heaven and earth, immanent and available in his world for all things that he has created. We can understand, in an entirely scientific way, all that Jesus said so beautifully of God's care for all his creatures, "Not a sparrow falleth without your father's notice." "Seek first the kingdom of God [adjustment], and all things shall be added." The processes of nature are seen, from this point of view, to be the ways in which a Supreme Intelligence works. They are not ends in themselves but means to great and ultimately beautiful ends. The preacher of the new renaissance in religion will be merely urging a higher and finer adjustment of man to all the forces at play around him, and he will have the warrant of sound science for every appeal he makes. Man's real environment will be infinitely enlarged,

and in a true sense he will be "a little lower than the angels." That environment will contain not only a physical habitat for a higher animal, but will literally bring into scientific review whole worlds in which man has always lived: the worlds of thought, of beauty, the little cosmic world which he himself is, the world of relationships with other people near and far—all that environment we call the community —and above all and conditioning all, that great world of religion in which dwells a God as personal as himself. With such a scientific foundation, any ideas, any traditions, or any practises can be tested for their value, and utilized. Forms will be changed, discarded, reshaped, or retained according to whether they can minister power to human living. Science is energy creating and sustaining all its forms. Religion is the power of God creating and sustaining in the same orderly way the highest form of nature, which is man. God is the author and finisher of both.

Science, then, is the orderly play of energy in nature. Religion is the play of energy in *human* nature. Not only are science and religion one in process, but the content of religion as experience is in no degree lessened by the prevailing scientific hypotheses. No respectable theory of nature could possibly leave out of consideration the highest experiences of mankind. Science itself is experience, and all credible and respectable experience is valid for science. The difficulty has been twofold. First, science naturally began by measuring the material world and it has not yet acquired adequate standards

for measuring psychic or spiritual feats. Since all human experience is rooted and takes its rise in a material body, it is not strange that science should refer all our sensations to that source. But surely there is something more in the dialogues of Plato than chemical changes in the brain, something more in the starry heavens above than the vibrations of an optic nerve, and something more in a symphony of Brahms than a certain number of sound waves beating upon a sensitive nerve. We are experiencing a spiritual world all the time, a world of thought, of beauty, of religion, and some day science will forge the instruments by which that world will be charted.

The second item of the difficulty lies in the fact that the record of religion comes to us largely in the form of poetry. It is the only way in which it could come from a pre-scientific age. Our Bible, for instance, is a priceless record of man's advancing religious experience. That experience is told in the only way it could be told, in the thought forms of the narrators. The simplest fact of nature to us might be a miracle to them. Miracles, visions, demons, were their court of reference for all mysterious happenings. What else could they do? Now when men begin to regard the Bible as literal truth in all respects, as in all parts equally authoritative, the Song of Solomon equally with the Sermon on the Mount, the creation story as valid for science as the Parable of the Prodigal Son for religion, they placed religion at an immense disadvantage. It was like drawing up an army with bows and arrows against

a machine-gun attack. The science of the first century cannot withstand the science of the twentieth century, whether it be in the Bible or anywhere else. It is over this temporary framework of religion that most of the discussion has been waged. Superstition is a faulty explanation of fact, and both science and religion have had to clear away these superstitions when clearer apprehension of the facts led to an adequate theory. All our well-known laws of nature have emerged by stripping off the entangling misconceptions, and religion has had an exactly similar history.

Now I think that the mutual understanding resulting from all this, at least among discerning thinkers, justifies us in declaring that all of the vital truths of religion, so far from being cramped or canceled, are greatly enlarged within the scope of the sweeping hypotheses of modern science. Evolution does not dispose of God. It merely disposes of our narrow ideas of God. It challenges us to find a God big enough to use nature's great processes. Creation is not disposed of. We are only finding out how God created the world and how he continues his creative work both in physical nature and in the lives of man. Man, under the present scientific view, is not forever looking back along the path by which he has come, but forward to his great destiny. His intelligence, turning the forces of nature to the uses of mankind, makes him a cocreator with God. Man has done with his inventions what nature could never do, unaided by him. His moral advance has not kept pace with his knowledge of science. He has brutally

misused the great forces placed in his hands, but the scientific method of trial and error is teaching him a good deal these days. In spite of the costly futility of the last great war, a new mood has overspread much of the civilized world. Sin in its scientific aspect is maladjustment, the transgression of law, and that applies to group adjustments quite as much as to individual adjustment of man to man, and of man to God. Aided by science, the preacher of righteousness has more to say about sin than ever before.

I cannot pursue the matter further now, but I am convinced that many findings of science go far in confirming the essential things of religion. Redemption has a meaning for the biologist, if he regards it as life given up for advancing life. This principle runs through all living things. Conversion is a phenomenon of variability, and "crises" are now familiar to psychology. All that rearrangement and transformation that is everywhere observable in both organic and inorganic nature, and which is central to the process of evolution, lies also at the heart of a religious experience. Old things do pass away and all things do become new when new energies are evoked. Mental states profoundly affect a man's whole being, as science so well knows in these days of psychoanalysis; why may not a man have his soul's window "open toward Jerusalem," and a mood of faith, like unto a scientist's faith, awaken sleeping energies within him? In short, there is every reason to believe that the truths of religion may assume the dimensions of that startling new universe

whose discovery so filled men's souls with dismay. In the new renaissance religion will be at home and possessed of an honorable place in that universe.

Another fact of striking importance for the new revival of interest in religion is seen in the changed attitude of many of the most distinguished scientists toward religion. The conflict of theological beliefs with scientific facts naturally bred a mood of denial, but the great majority of first-rate scientists, from Galileo down, have been men of deep religious feeling. Within a very few years many of the maturer scientists have been quite outspoken in declaring that science has discovered nothing that interferes with religion. I mean by the maturer scientists those who, like Pupin, Millikan, and Osler, are distinguished technicians and are also possessed of a culture wide enough to give their judgment philosophical weight. Doctor Millikan's manifesto signed by upward of a hundred prominent scientists, has been widely circulated, and marks the emergence of a new era in scientific thinking about religion. I doubt if even a dozen years ago conditions were favorable for the utterance of such a statement. This constitutes at once a great encouragement and a great challenge to the proponents of religion.

Especially upon the preachers does it place a heavy responsibility. These scientific men (and they represent a vast number of people less distinguished than themselves, whose mental background is scientific), virtually declare that their knowledge of the forces of nature does not preclude the possibility of other forces at work among men, that religion as popu-

larly interpreted is overlaid with matters that obscure rather than clarify its simplicity, that the church has too much relied on past interpretations, and that too often incidental matters have been exalted into fundamentals without warrant. They implicitly ask the preacher to make his business clear, to talk about it in language that he can understand, and to show how men may acquire the power which religion supplies. There could not be a fairer proposition, and if the preachers of religion will meet it as fairly, a great spiritual experience is sure to be the result. I am yielding to a temptation, when I bear, for the good of the cause, the testimony that my own attempts to speak of religion in this way have always been met with the warmest response. I quote an impulsive remark of a professor of biology when he exclaimed: "My God! Why didn't you come twenty-five years ago?"

I must mention two other matters before I can complete my reasons for believing in a coming renewal of interest in personal religion. Within the present generation the church has acquired a social message. Its relation to the community has become organic. Formerly the church seemed a separate society within the community, giving alms to the community, rather than being vitally identified with it. This is an immense gain and has greatly widened the appeal of the Christian gospel. In addition to declaring that it had a responsibility and a gospel for individual souls, the church has frankly declared its responsibility for the community in which such individuals live. The Christian gospel is now seen

to be possessed of two hemispheres, the individual and the social, and to operate exactly alike in each. The Christian spirit in an individual man's life reorganizes that life in all respects, with new purposes, new feelings, new activities. He is in the accepted Christian language a converted man. In the same way, when the Christian spirit prevails in man's *relationships,* domestic, social, business, and political, the group, the community is renewed. No man can preach an adequate gospel unless he keeps these two hemispheres together. The Christian church has gained mightily in influence because of the social causes for which it has definitely taken responsibility. There has grown up within thirty years within the church a conscience for social iniquity and, like its Master, the church is increasingly bearing the sins of others. Causes, all the way from clean milk for babies to economic justice and the outlawry of war, have been taken on her heart, and she is solidifying her sentiment for action. Her accomplishments during the past quarter-century in creating public opinion are impressive.

It would be a crime if any of this were abated, but I suggest that there is reason to fear an overemphasis on the social side of the gospel. It is a question of balance. A church may be so busy with activities, all of them good, that its soul may become starved. Ask any pastor of an institutional church with its round of duties sucking him in like a maelstrom, what becomes of his religious passion. In a day when the church cruelly needs prophets, she is turning her pastors into business managers. During the past few

years I have noted several things with some disquiet. Several of my friends, evangelists of national influence, acceptable to the most intelligent communities, have shifted their emphasis almost wholly to social causes. They have done splendid work in bettering conditions here and abroad, but the loss of their great influence in quickening the individual spiritual lives of thousands, is keenly felt. We may well rejoice in all that these men have accomplished to abolish war, and to better race and industrial relations, but there comes a time when the Christian community needs spiritual refreshing, an access of clean, red blood to face the difficult tasks that confront it. Unless I have misread all the signs, and misinterpret my own experience, the army of driven Christian workers needs rest and refreshment.

It has been a hard half-century through which we have just come. Our brains have been strained in the effort to absorb all the new knowledge that has poured in upon us from every side, and our bodies are tired from pursuing the new quests upon which the new social conscience has sent us. In the press of the world's most important business, it was Jesus who said to his disciples, " Come ye apart with me and rest awhile." Our ceaseless doing must be balanced by an adequate replenishing of spiritual energy. The Christian church needs a Truce of God in the midst of its battlings. What I should like to see just now is a whole year devoted to rededication and enlistment. This is as far as possible from asceticism or mere emotionalism. It is inventory, inspiration, and the search for a new communion

with God. I should like to see my friends mentioned above and many more like them, who have entered the lists against the great social and international wrongs, pleading the great task that Christ has undertaken in the world as an argument for a new knighthood among believers and a wide enlistment of the venturous. I believe that a new and godlike power would come upon us, and I believe also that the great causes which Christianity has now definitely espoused, would be set forward more than by all of the propaganda now in force. The church is roundly criticised every day, from within and without, for being unable to generate power. Here would be power and power abundant coming from the Living Source.

The same change of emphasis is noticeable in the better religious journalism of the day. It is naturally the reflection of the attitude of many Christian leaders. And every word of incitement to enlistment in the great social causes contained in these publications is needed to stir the church group into action. But again it is a matter of balance. Agitation of causes may arouse action, but it will not sustain enthusiasm forever. A crusade is a holy thing, but what of the crusader's vision? How much of stimulation to religious devotion can one extract from the best of these religious journals? I know the answer that is ready, namely, that in the pursuit of great tasks one finds a quickening of enthusiasm and a replenishing of spirit, but does one detect in the tone of some leading writers in these journals a return to the "Religion of Humanity," that man

finds God *only* in his efforts for man? Of course I know that experience, and of course I recall the great words "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these least, ye have done it unto me," but in confining God within the limits of humanity we are likely to be exchanging one anthropomorphism for another. This generation is having more trouble understanding the personality of God than any other in history, and the greatest service that could be rendered to the readers of these journals and to the causes they advocate, would be to make clear what kind of God it is that the Christians believe in. The idea of God which many Christian writers and preachers have is exceedingly hazy. In rejecting anthropomorphism and symbolism, they seem to have landed in the fog. What greater task could religious journalism attack than that of making God vivid to a God-hungry generation? If the heart of religion is communion with God, as we have so long declared, how can we carry on his kingdom when we are not sure of him at all? Certain it is that the men who accept the commissions of service to humanity, men of the present as well as of the past, are conscious of the presence and call of God, and find their spiritual replenishment not alone in the service itself, but in the continuing experience of communion with him.

Nothing that has just been said about the social emphasis can be interpreted as a return to the view that the church's sole business is to gain individual converts. That view holds that when there are Christians enough there will be a Christian social

order, a view that is voluminously false as all history shows. I am only suggesting that overemphasis on social activities has reduced the spiritual tone, and the resultant need is an element in the new renaissance of personal religion.

The last reason I shall cite for belief in an imminent spiritual revival is the present very earnest interest of educators in the religious life of students. Just now there is a decided revolution going on in the whole field of educational method. Our educational system has spread out like a fan in all directions. It has been swamped with subjects each having no relationship to any other. There is little or no correlation or unification of these subjects into an organic whole. As Doctor Learned has amply shown in his Carnegie Foundation report, what our students acquire is a series of *credits*. There may be numerous bricks in the intellectual backyards of our college graduates, but nothing seems to have been built. Constructive and sustained thinking on the part of our students is exactly what our educational system does not produce, and educational statesmen are attacking this situation vigorously. Each department of knowledge seems to be a specialism existing for itself alone, and often the directors of these departments are as sensitive about their prerogatives and boundaries as America is in her relations with the other nations of the world. That is the main reason why even a provisional synthetic philosophy, based upon all the findings of science, has been so long delayed, and why the chief difficulties for religion have proceeded from the partial

philosophies of these specialisms. Our knowledge is departmentalized. Dr. H. G. Parker, of William Jewell College, discoverer with Doctor Richards of Harvard of the Richards-Parker method of atomic weight, and an expert in water analysis, tells me that water analysis as carried on by at least two of the great universities of his acquaintance results in two separate reports, one bacteriological and the other chemical, which have to be related by a third specialist, or not related at all.

Add to this the immeasurable extension of knowledge in every field of science, and the confusion is twice confounded. For instance, there are some twenty-eight departments of chemistry, and Doctor Parker informs me, after a careful estimate, that every day in the year, Sundays and holidays, there appears an amount of new knowledge in chemistry sufficient to fill an octavo volume of some seven hundred pages. Small wonder that our science, philosophy, education, and religion are at loose ends, and one is moved not so much to criticise the poor accomplishments of students, as to sympathize with the teachers who are thus bewildered by their riches.

Now what has happened is this. Education has run too largely to specialism and equipment. The prizes have gone to the research men, and thus the ablest of the teaching force have been withdrawn from the students themselves. The subjects to be taught have displaced the objects toward which that teaching is directed, and those " objects " are living persons passing through the most volcanic period of their lives. One professor satirized, or rather

solemnized, the whole situation when he said that teaching would be great business if it were not for the students. The time is coming when the technicians and the teachers will be separated, one to his work in the laboratory, the other to the greater business of molding and shaping men and women. Education is the culture of the human spirit, what A. N. Whitehead somewhere calls "preparation for the adventure of living."

The prominent educators of the country are now thoroughly alive to this condition, and are making every effort to meet it. Evidence is voluminous on this point. The president of one of our great Middle Western universities recently called his faculty of several hundred together to propound several questions for their consideration. Two of these questions bear upon our discussion and exhibit a hopeful trend: "Is it our business to cram as much knowledge as possible into these students during their stay here?" "Have we any responsibility for the moral and spiritual development of the students during these four crucial years?" Time was when religion was regarded with patronizing condescension at the learned institutions, but that mood has largely changed in the last few years, and many of us who spend all our time on college campuses can testify to a warm response from faculties and students when we succeed in presenting religion in language they use every day.

There was a most significant gathering of nearly a hundred of the leading educators, college presidents, deans, headmasters, and professors, at Prince-

ton in 1928 for the purpose of discussing this very subject of religion. These men came in the busiest season of the college year and at their own charges, to confer upon the religious teaching of students. The report of that conference is worthy of the closest scrutiny, for it not only reveals a great concern but exhibits some of the serious problems waiting to be solved. But why multiply instances? The educational institutions can no longer be suspected of hostility to religion, they are distinctly friendly to sane religion and to every effort to make religion operative in the lives of their constituencies. This is the great challenge to the Christian church at this moment. I am convinced that the "fields are white unto harvest," and I am equally convinced that it will never be garnered by reapers with antiquated tools.

III

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH THE CHURCH?

It is misleading to think of religion or of science as compact entities that can easily be viewed as a whole. They are not two little islands just offshore which can be seen in clear outline. They are the peninsulas of a great continent stretching away infinitely beyond the reach of eyes and theodolites. Science has erected on its peninsula its little shack from which a wide exploration of its hinterland has been made. Religion, across the intervening bay, occupies a much older shack, and its hinterland has likewise been considerably explored. For a long time the prospectors have glared at each other jealously, but the hope is in the back country still untraversed. America was much larger than the first explorers thought. To speak therefore of the church or of science as organizations of research, one must be discriminating. The church is the name for a vast army of people to whom religion is a reality in widely varying depths and interpretations. Like an army its advance will not be uniform. There are scouts who are far out ahead, supporting parties just behind, engineers and sappers who effect the first defenses and keep open communication, while far to the rear is the vast majority in the slow-moving units. Progress of the whole is therefore necessarily

slow. Something like this is the case in the whole movement of religion. It is only a few who catch and absorb the drift of new knowledge. They, like scouts, are likely to get too far out in front. Others proceed less rapidly though making solid advance, while the great body of religious people lag far to the rear, and only, sometimes after several generations, do they occupy the assured positions on the front.

New knowledge calls for new molds of thought, new interpretations, new doctrines, and hence differences, due to different speeds, arise and produce what we know as denominations. Denominations are like crystals, taking their forms from the varying pressures to which they have been subjected. There never has been any such thing as undenominational Christianity, and there never will be. Even in the ages of the church's greatest solidarity, there were varying groups of thinkers only loosely held to the main body by the stress of outward authority. Orthodoxy has never been unanimous among either Roman Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Christian Scientists, or Baptists. Men are not built to think exactly alike, and the absurd method of trying to cram all minds into the same mold has bred all the bloody civil wars within the church for centuries, and has left all the flanks of Christianity exposed to the galling fire of its enemies.

What I am particularly concerned with here, however, is to point out that denominationalism in the broad sense is entirely natural. It is to the higher life of man, mental and spiritual, what morphology

is to biology. Every plant and animal has its own peculiar form, and yet each is a partaker of the energy called life. Likewise each denomination is the rationalized form which its particular spiritual life creates. The clover cannot say unto the maple, "I have no need of thee." Both are partakers of the same life, and life is the real fundamental for both. Now exactly this same denominationalism exists in every field of thought and research. All science is divided up into denominations as sharply marked and as gifted for war, as is the church. Biology, physics, chemistry, sociology, psychology, philosophy, all of them are divided up into schools when it comes to the interpretations of their facts. A science, let us remind ourselves, is both an array of hard facts and their interpretation, and "denominations" in science, exactly as denominations in religion, arise at the point where the meanings of those facts are being sought. These sciences have their shibboleths as numerous as those of theology, and a good-sized row can be started any time when somebody starts to cross the disputed river with the wrong pronunciation of the password. Throw into a scientific assembly such golden apples as vitalism, entelechy, teleology, behaviorism, atomism, holism, and a host of others, and you will witness as fine a scramble among the gods of science as could be seen at an œcumenical council or a Baptist association. Let me quote just one example of this decided tendency to use sharp speech, from the preface of Wm. McDougall's *Outline of Psychology:*

This mechanical psychology is decidedly preponderant at the present time, and my book therefore is largely a polemic against all psychology of this type and on behalf of purposive psychology. For I am sure that nothing is to be gained by disguising or slurring over this issue, and that it must be frankly faced and resolved before psychology can go forward with the harmony and agreement upon fundamentals which prevail in the physical sciences.

And again:

This tendency to simplification is, in fact, the root of the mechanistic mosaic psychology, that which describes mental process as made up of static elements, "units of feeling," "atoms of sensation," "particles of mind-dust," "neutral entities," or what not. Its latest exponent, Mr. Bertrand Russell, has performed the service of reducing it to the lowest level of banality in the *Analysis of Mind.* Recently it has begotten upon physiology a most misshapen and beggarly dwarf, namely behaviorism, which just now is rampant in this country. But fortunately there are signs of a better future.

All of which sounds refreshing indeed, to those who have been so often rallied upon their denominational differences. The fact is that men of science and men of religion are exploring the same continent, one in one section, the other in another, and the day is not distant when they will strike hands in the interior far back from intervening bays.

With this expository preliminary, I want now to ask the question, "What is the matter with the church?" Burke's principle holds here, that you cannot bring an indictment against a whole people, because they are never all guilty. My first answer, therefore, is that for a very considerable section of

the Christian church today, there is nothing whatever the matter, except what inheres in our common faulty human nature. There are hundreds of churches throughout the country of all stripes of theological thinking, which are doing a mighty work in ministering spiritual power to their constituents and to the general moral order. It is not the fashion to be caught, red-handed, praising the church, but that may be ample reason for believing that our appraisal is not altogether accurate. With so much to criticise, we are likely to overlook the church's real contribution. The Christian church in all its hundreds of forms is a vital organ in the structural life of American civilization. Remove it bodily by major surgical operation, and the physical, moral, intellectual vitality of the country would be fearfully reduced. As an institution it may utterly fail, but what it lifts up as ideals, as goals for human strivings, will have worked into the developing stuff of humanity long before it has failed. Parkman declares that the Jesuit missions among the Indians of Canada failed because the Indians themselves were doomed to extinction, but in the softening of manners for all time the devoted lives of these heroic men bore rich fruit. The church's influence is atmospheric, so to speak. No matter how imperfect either the institution or most of its adherents may be, some ingredient like ozone seeps through into the general air, and the moral health looks up.

But the churches are doing much more than this. There are thousands of churches throughout the country that have taken no part in the current theo-

logical controversies, have had little interest in them, and there are other thousands of churches whose pastors may have become involved, but in which are many wise enough to know that it was a preachers' fight anyhow, and ought to have been threshed out in ministers' conferences and in other prize-rings. These good people have gone right on living their Christian lives, teaching their Bible classes, giving to missions, paying their controversial pastors' salaries, and doing their best to create that atmosphere for which Christ gave his sacrificial life. And boys and girls have grown up in the Christian idealism, have been steadied during their volcanic youth, have made life decisions of high import, and in countless number are coming forward to take the Christian standards from the hands of those who drop out.

Statistics aside, the church of Christ is by no means the defunct organization that occasional doctrinaire magazine articles would lead us to suppose. She is still the central force in marching civilization, there is much reason to believe. Having been closely identified with the theological controversies in my own and in other denominations, I believe I have the warrant for saying that the vast majority of preachers are heartily sick of the whole divisive business, and are giving to their flocks the best spiritual nurture possible to them. The business of religion has continued without a break. Religion is not primarily a rationalism, no matter what the fundamentalists say; it is not essentially a system of philosophy or theology, no matter how long

the church has made orthodoxy (right ideas) the principal concern. Religion is concerned with tapping the sources of spiritual power, and power can be adduced even by the crudest adaptations. Our intellectualistic age has insisted that accurate description, logic, coherent systems of thought with no matter included that is not thoroughly explained, are essential to religious experience. When these things are not forthcoming, it promptly announces its agnosticism and adopts the only course open to agnosticism, namely, inaction. Know nothing means do nothing. But surely this is in contradiction to the whole spirit of inductive science.

We experience things first, then do our best to explain them. A body of facts drawn from experiment must first be acquired before a philosophy of those facts is at all possible. The facts of nature and the facts of religion are in no sense dependent upon our *a priori* theories about them. If we waited for absolute theories the whole world would be at a standstill, for there is in no science an absolutely adequate theory, else it would not be a theory at all. Theories begin at the outer edges of apprehended facts, and are in large part the scientific man's confession of faith. Eminent scientific men are gravely doubting whether the human organism is equipped to record any fact with absolute accuracy. What I am trying to make clear is that religious experience, the acquiring of spiritual power, is not dependent on ideas, on right thinking alone, for it is conceivable that, by the process of exclusion of all doubtful matter, a man's creed would become as empty as a vacuum.

That is precisely the danger that confronts the extreme modernist as he enters any field of reality. To leave out all the things for which adequate explanation is not at hand means the renunciation of science as well as of religion.

I am making no plea for ignorance nor for lazy thinking, but we can talk without knowing the mechanism of the voice-box, we can walk while totally ignorant of the mechanics of walking, we can think without even locating the thought organ, by the automatic adjustments of our bodily organs to prevailing energies. We just do all these things without ever knowing quite how. Surely we are equipped as well in our spiritual nature as in our physical, to appropriate the energies available for our spirits, and the religious history of mankind is ample proof of this.

And we must not forget that the church has always shown the capacity of absorbing revolutionary truths and of reinterpreting its own truths in terms of them. She has done this in every scientific age, and is doing it now on a large scale. With the noise of reaction still loud in our ears, we need to remember that the new science has penetrated large areas of the Christian church, and interpretation by thoughtful and spiritually minded teachers and preachers has greatly enriched our understanding of the old truths and the old experiences of religion. We cannot modernize reality. All we can do is to modernize our thinking about reality. Love, forgiveness, repentance, faith, unselfishness, sacrifice for others, sound social and moral living, all these great things which are found in Jesus' interpretation

of God the Father—you cannot modernize these except in expression, and it is these matters that have been faithfully proclaimed with telling effect, far from the zone of controversy, much more than we are accustomed to believe. The fields have been cultivated and crops have been raised even if some of the implements are crude. You don't really need a McCormick machine to raise a crop of corn or potatoes.

It has been my privilege to work with many men whose theological views I could not possibly hold, the forms of whose thought about religion were rigid and unscientific, but whose spiritual life and mellow Christian influence would put many a modernist to blush. These men knew God, believed in the redeeming power of Jesus, exhibited the fruits of a gracious experience in their own lives, and were powerful advocates of the higher life. We should probably dispute every theological statement they made, but the machinery of their thought processes would be lost in the fineness of the product which they achieved. The finest meal I ever tasted was ground in an ancient windmill of Rhode Island. If a religious renaissance comes, men must learn to look away from intellectual differences that inevitably divide, to find a ground of sympathetic unity in a common religious experience. Christian unity will never be achieved by the tinkering of creeds, but by the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," and that unity has immensely increased in the last quarter-century. The new revival will be far on its way when we have solidified the spiritual life now exist-

ing in the church. The test then will not be theological, but dynamic, not what we are able to rationalize according to the best standards, but how much of the life of Christ we can exhibit. I recall an incident that occurred at Yale some years ago. The great actor, Joseph Jefferson, was answering questions sent up by the students in a public gathering. At one point he read a long question involving the history and technique of the drama. The student had probably been hearing some lectures in dramatic art, and he piled the learning on thick. Jefferson smiled and then in answer said, "Bless your heart, boy, I don't know a single thing about that." But what Jefferson did know was how to absorb, interpret, and relive the life of Rip Van Winkle! When we dramatize the life of Christ, all other matters become secondary.

I turn now to ask severely and sympathetically, as a physician bent on cure might ask, What is the matter with the church? Christianity as a whole lacks religious climate. The whole indictment rests on this single fact that religious people, and much more often the religious leaders, are deficient in the very virtues which religion is supposed to inculcate. Everything else could be forgiven if Christians would only be Christian. The church is cursed with an era of bad feeling out of which worse things grow. Of course this is not universal, as I have just tried to show, but the voices that are heard have produced this situation over a wide area, and moreover they have lodged the impression in the mind of the public at large that the churches are concerned

chiefly with matters far removed from the creation of good-will even among themselves. No Christian group can point the finger of scorn at any other, for theological controversy has invaded them all. Some of the more loosely organized churches fight in their backyards where the neighbors can be witnesses, while others because of repressive authority fight within doors, with only an occasional rumble to indicate the proceedings, but there is a solemn similarity among them all. The Catholic Church has had its modernist movement now for many years, the Christian Scientists since the death of Mrs. Eddy are still disputing their apostolic succession, Baptists and Presbyterians (with Methodists somewhat less noisy) have been, and still are, wrestling with fundamentalism, evolution, and literalism, the Episcopalians here and abroad are locked in a contest over the creeds and the Prayer-book, while other groups gravely insist on the primacy of the Sabbath or the shape of the earth.

All this of course is good copy for the sporting editors of our newspapers, and they play it up as near as possible to the account of other more or less violent contests like marathons and prize-fights. In a day when it is indubitably true that in many places the Protestant denominations are nearer together in mutual understanding and in cooperation than ever before, the strident voice of controversy has succeeded in giving the impression that they are still bitterly at war with each other and within their own organizations. It must be remembered that cooperation is a function of the

small group, those who are far out in front, while differences affect the large masses in the constituency of the churches. The large masses make much the larger noise, and soon all other sounds are overspread. The public, and to a large extent the church itself, accepts the verdict of the big noise. Popular clamor never rendered a decent verdict on any subject in all its blustering career. The issues are confused in the mind of the general public. If the creative movements that are going on among the Christian communions could have as wide a publicity as the distracting ones, a totally different impression would be prevalent.

There occurred, for instance, at Eastertime 1928, an event the like of which has scarcely happened in Christian history, and which, if generally known, would send a thrill throughout Christendom. A group of men and women, representing fifty nations of the world, of widely differing racial, religious, and intellectual backgrounds, met on the Mount of Olives to confer upon the truths of Christianity which are held in common and to plan a united effort to spread the teaching of Christ throughout the world. This is a more significant sign of our time because of its constructive influence than all the disputations that mark the break-up and reforming of our thinking about religion. The last twenty-five years have been marked by many instances of united forward movement among all the denominations, and a summary of these would be particularly impressive at this time. The army is on the march, though many soldiers far to the

rear persist in their noisy quarrels over their beer and skittles.

Now the credit of religion is like financial credit. It is based on confidence. If the prevailing feeling is that all is well, business goes on merrily. Men are not afraid to risk their money in investments. Let a rumor be started as baseless as the fabric of a dream, and the bottom drops out of the exchanges of the world. Everything is in a slump, and countless fortunes are lost. Confidence envelops the world of solid business like an atmosphere. The unseen, the intangible thing controls all the rest. There is no doubt that the credit of Christianity has been greatly impaired in the years succeeding the war. Its stock has gone down. Because of its failures contributory to the great war, because of its controversies since the Armistice, because of the struggle, that will not end for a long time, to adjust the truths of religion to the new ways of looking at the universe, because of the general condition of unsettlement that prevails everywhere in respect to all fundamental matters, of science, religion, politics, racial adjustments, economics, and war, every attack upon Christianity has seemed a *coup de grâce* to put it permanently out of its misery. This is far from the real situation. What is blinding our eyes is smoke—smoke issuing largely from the refuse of religion. Underneath there is a core of burning, concentrated fire that will blaze brightly in due season. What we need is a merger on the stock-market of religion that will solidify the sound holdings of many stockholders into a going concern. That movement

would stimulate all other forward movements. Such a turn of affairs would be as far as possible from any mechanical union of denominations or creeds, but, on the other hand, would mean a deeper expression of the religious life that would cancel all the bad feeling our differences have aroused. Our convictions are often the clubs with which we belabor those who do not carry a similar club. But our creeds, like our clubs, are potential fire and light. If we could pile them all together blazing, what an illumination there would be! What the Christian church needs above everything else is a higher type of religious living. Clergy and laymen alike, we have been led away by a thousand expedients, from a life of simple devotion, of prayer, of Christlike feeling and service. We can afford to lose any debate, if we can keep our contacts with the living Christ. The church needs religion. It has become a big, buzzing, booming factory with no quiet spot left for devotion and prophecy. We have been discussing the niceties of the text and the plot of the Christian drama, haggling over the jots and the tittles, while what has been neglected is that absorption in its spirit which alone can get us ready to play our parts. The religion of Jesus is convincing only when it is acted, never when it is merely discussed. A page from L. P. Jacks' *Living Universe* makes this clearer than I possibly could:

> Play acting of course is often a frivolous affair. But in the hands of a great master like Sophocles or Shakespeare, there is nothing more serious under the sun. I rank the drama, when a great master is handling it, as one of the

most powerful instruments ever invented for conveying the highest truths to the human mind. Have you never felt after witnessing a fine performance of Othello or of Lear, that something has been shown you which you cannot put into words, but which you recognize as profoundly and tremendously true? Who can *say* exactly what it means when Othello slays Desdemona, or when Cordelia dies in the arms of her distracted father? But who does not *know* what it means when he sees it in action? At such times we catch the truth of Goethe's saying—"The highest cannot be spoken." None the less, it can be acted, and become through the action perfectly convincing to those for whom it was meant. Again I refer to Christianity. Take out of Christianity the acted part, and leave out the spoken part, and what would that be worth? What would become of the *power* if the action were left out? What would become of the highest truth? It is not the preaching but the thing preached about that *tells* in Christianity. And that is the *deed.* Is not Christianity a divine drama, the greatest that has ever been staged on the world's history? Do not its truth, its reality pivot on a deed that is done? "Go thou, and do likewise."

What has thus far been said in criticism of the church is general and, I shall be told, has been said many times. Can these criticisms be made vivid so as to show their effect upon the general atmosphere in which religion must live? All the great revivals of the past, secular and religious, were caught up, so to speak, in an enveloping spirit that was exhilarating, stimulating, and creative. There was "something in the air," and that something made possible achievements that at other times were quite impossible. The discovery of the classics, the recovery of Aristotle, the preaching of St. Francis, the work of the Encyclopedists in France, the protest of Luther, all these had the effect of awakening the deeps in

men's souls and minds, and momentous historic events were the inevitable result. The air was actinic, as the physicists would say, full of stimulating rays of energy. Now, what is the matter with the Christian church, that it cannot produce, in an age hungry for vital religion, this enveloping atmosphere which will at once stimulate and satisfy men's souls? The answer is that the church is a vast power-plant, but the many tangles in the machinery prevent the flow of the power. The levers are locking the wheels, the valves are shutting off the steam, the pistons are rattling in unoiled cylinders, and there is no engineer in control. The unavoidable result is friction, clatter, and much breakdown. Coordination, mutual working together of parts to a common end, is what is needed.

Indeed, the situation is much more serious than this. Over large sections of Christendom today it is doubtful whether there is any idea of coordination at all. Each Christian group considers itself as the power-house, and will consent to a hook-up only on its own plan. I think we should be surprised to find how many of the clergy and laity in all of our churches, Protestant and Catholic, would speak on this wise: "We may, of course, not be infallible, but we solemnly warn you that you join any other church at your own risk." This is lamentably true within the limits of many individual denominations. In our own country there are denominations, one section of which looks upon the other in its own communion as foreign mission territory. At the bottom of all this are theological, racial, and

many other considerations, that make the group impermeable. It is not a pleasant thing to say, but it is undeniable that there is a tragic amount of sectionalism in American Christianity. The Civil War, for instance, closed in 1865, but what of the Solid South? Granting the need of political solidarity in the South for many years after the struggle over slavery ended, can there be any doubt that prejudice has furnished some of the strongest bands to this unity? And prejudice on the other side of the line has been equally hard to allay. It has taken a long time to get these two sections of the country to see that they are both integral parts of the same race and the same nation. I recall hearing Dr. P. S. Henson tell of the visit of his Southern father, shortly after the Civil War, to the son's home in a Northern city. They attended prayer-meeting together in the Northern church. As they walked home after the meeting, the father remarked in some amazement, "Why, son, they talk and pray just like our folks!" The truth is that all people everywhere are just like our folks, and there can be no comity in religion or in politics, until we come to understand this.

Has this sectionalism worked into our religious life? Ask Baptists, Disciples, Methodists, Presbyterians, and some other Christian groups. I understand that within each of these groups polite conferences are often held, and some matters, perhaps of major importance, are jointly administered; but is there a structural unity and sympathy between them? Are there not capital reservations on both sides, and does not the section from which each

comes color deeply the theological or administrative point of view? After the pleasantries are disposed of and fundamental things brought into review, do these groups see eye to eye? With the varying views, which can never be tinkered into uniformity, do they agree to disagree and resolve to love? Or, does contempt suggest the ancient question, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" There is sectionalism in American Christianity, and it is unchristian. It breeds cocksureness, intolerance, contempt, and a general distrust in the face of which no renascence of spiritual life on a large scale is possible. There is what might be called a border warfare within denominations, characterized by an ecclesiastical politics that some secular politicians might refuse, in which colleges and churches are pulled from one side to the other, with some violence to more than one of the Ten Commandments. How can the Christ spirit prevail in the hearts of men if the accredited leaders of these sections of the church cannot work together honestly and fairly?

It is my judgment that nothing holds back the coming era of religious experience, so much as these brutal theological, racial, and scientific differences that are producing such a devastating effect wherever they prevail. Discord is the devil's ancient trick, and curiously enough it always works. If his Satanic majesty can only keep Christians divided, he can roar raucous laughter out of his lair. Not only does discord in the form of competing orthodoxies divide the church up into camps, but it has a strange and devilish way of transforming

individual character. Men, under all other circumstances of high probity and gentleness of heart, will do things and say things quite out of keeping with their normal selves. I think of a case in which men administering a Christian institution, men otherwise of unquestioned honesty and business standing, utterly refused to accept findings that any court of equity would approve, evidently because of the support those findings might give to certain men of a different theological point of view, who had been greatly wronged. Partisan passion can change honest opinion into dreadful weapons of destruction.

I insist that I am pursuing this unpleasant diagnosis in a constructive spirit. I have traveled this border zone of controversy for a number of years, and I think I have a right both to an opinion about it and to a suggestion of help if I can find one. I have not belonged to any theological party. I will have no "ists" to my name, though I have often been labeled by the uninformed in high places. When one man slaps a label on another man's back, it is pretty good evidence that he has run out of information, and that his mind has ceased to work. Instead of the active verb, he must curl up in a passive substantive. The judgment is on the "labeler" (one might so easily change that *a* to an *i!*), not on the "labeled." Among churches and institutions of learning the country over I have sought to pursue a ministry of reconciliation, to show that religious reality is always the same, however diverse the forms of expression, and I have, therefore, never

knowingly uttered a scornful word about anybody's theology. One of the delights of the past few years has been to find myself among people who had accepted the appraisal of radical put upon me by some soap-boxer, and to find after full and frank counsel that we were viewing the very same landscape through different glasses.

If I may be pardoned for taking another leaf out of my diary, one of the most heart-warming experiences of my recent life came recently in an experience of mutual understanding among a group of men of far divergent theological views. I had been tagged, and when I arrived for a series of addresses, pad and pencil were in every man's pocket ready to record my heresies. When it was all over we fell on each other's necks, not with dire intent, but with rejoicing at the great gospel we all believed in. I cannot praise too much these earnest men who, despite their conservative views, came with open minds to "hear again of this matter." I do not think I changed in the slightest degree any opinion these men held—so far as doctrine is concerned we are probably as far apart as ever—but we did meet, after the first shock, without reservation, without suspicion, with an earnest desire to know the truth, and a deepened religious experience was the result. When Christians get together *with one accord,* which means, I take it, not with the same thought alone, but with the same *heart,* a spirit does come upon them, and they speak sometimes with new tongues.

Now in this very matter of suspicion and labeling

among Christians, I think we can detect one of the things that is seriously the matter with the church. The church in many of her communions has allowed herself to be stampeded by demagogues. We are hearing these days a good deal about the instincts of the herd, and some of our denominations are giving fine illustrations of it. The church to which I belong (and the same could be said of several others) has allowed itself to be put into a panic by a handful of men of very ordinary abilities. Possessing little of scholarship, they are not competent to meet the issues of science and criticism in a constructive manner, and perhaps with the utmost sincerity, sensing the danger the new truth always brings, they take the easier line of appeal to the people to preserve the truth "once for all delivered." To them the truth is a formal, unchangeable statement, hard and hurtful as flint. They make the false assumption that the New Testament comprises a series of nice, neat, metaphysical statements of what the gospel of Jesus is, that can be put together as accurately as a picture puzzle, and that can be demonstrated like a proposition in Euclid. That is the real heresy that has infected Christianity for sixteen hundred years. Theology by rattling the skeleton of religion has shaken the very life out of it. I understand perfectly that a skeleton is a necessary framework, but a skeleton is not a man, living, breathing, thinking, aspiring, acting. When the rich and varied life of religion was replaced by the historic creeds of the church, we exchanged a living world for a valley of dry bones. For centuries now,

and acutely at the present time, the test of orthodoxy has been a man's thinking, his theology, when nothing remotely resembling this is to be found anywhere in the New Testament. "The highest cannot be spoken."

You will look in vain in the New Testament for a system of thought or even for rules of conduct, for the very good reason that the New Testament is neither a treatise on philosophy nor yet a book of ethics. It is a book of life, and what you will find is the story of people animated by a new and marvelous vitality. The gospel of Jesus is the good news of that life. Jesus lived in the most disputatious age of history. The whole atmosphere was bristling with questions. Palestine was divided up into all sorts of sects, religious and political. What we should call socialists, anarchists, freethinkers, fundamentalists, modernists, buzzed about Jesus, darting their stings, all during his short career. He never attempted to resolve a single one of their questions, and he never demanded a single intellectual test. He spoke deliberately in parables, apparently to avoid the use of his sayings for mechanical thought systems, "that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand." He silenced petty controversies in the only way they can ever be silenced, by drenching the disputants with new life. Bones disappear when living flesh clothes them. "I came that they might have life"; "I am the way, the truth and the life," and he validated these great claims not by argument or definition, but by the fact that his followers showed unmistakable signs of new life. And that is exactly

the nature of life—it can never be defined—it can only be acted. If you should go into a happy family with a view of studying the secret of domestic felicity you would not come away with definitions and propositions that could be worked up into a logical system. All the mechanical tests of the new psychology would tell you nothing of the spirit of that home. There would be a fabric of evidence woven by the mutual glances of the family, by their speech, their movements, their manner of doing of the common tasks, by the way they agreed and differed, by their laughter and tears; but the *thing*, family love, would utterly elude you. Love can never be defined except in terms of life, and religion is exactly like love in this respect. Those who have lived in such a home know what family love is, and they who have been with Jesus learn of him what religion is.

In declaring that the church has allowed itself to be stampeded by demagogues, I am not forgetting that the men of conservative theological views who have raised the alarm are not the only ones responsible for the present confusion. There are modernists quite as fundamentalist in their attitudes as any fundamentalist. In their rejection of all "tradition," what they call supernaturalism, and in their insistence upon points of view and upon terms which are by no means scientifically substantiated, they have reduced religion to the merest shell of its former self. All that new materialism which finds the sole explanation of consciousness, mind, and the higher spiritual functions of man in physics and

chemistry, would, if strictly applied, dispose of the very energies on which our visible universe rests. In the end both religion and science must fall back upon an inscrutable mystery which pervades them both and out of which all the forms of expression in both proceed. In disposing of the myths and dogmas of religion, the modernist is often guilty of throwing out the core of truth which these attempted to express. The conservative-progressive controversy in both science and religion has been a conflict of rationalisms, of intellectual appraisals, and the danger always is that the realities themselves may often be overlooked.

Now an age that does not find itself in controversy is a dead intellectual age. There is a degree in which the violent discussions of our day are evidences of an intellectual vigor. There are so many things to adjudicate, so many new discoveries in every field that seem at variance with the body of knowledge already existing in that field, so many theories, adequate to a former state of information, that have had to give place to far different hypotheses, that it is not possible to secure a unanimous opinion in any science or philosophy. That condition of uncertainty will prevail for many decades to come. We can never hope to have men all of one mind, and it would be an extremely uninteresting world if they all were. The vicious thing about it all is that differences of opinion make people unreasonable when they need most to be reasonable, ugly in their feelings when they ought to be sweet and friendly. Perhaps it is too much to expect our

frail humanity to have convictions and be patient at the same time, but that state of mind must ultimately exist if either science or religion is to go forward with any degree of speed.

The condition in current Christianity that is tragic does not consist in differences of opinion, but in the feelings which those differences arouse. That shows our lack of religion, for the " fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control." These are all the finer emotions, and they are contrasted in the same Scripture with the fruits of the flesh among which are listed " enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties," all ugly feelings that have done their destructive work all too well. Religion is roundly challenged today not so much to defend its beliefs or to restate its realities in terms of the new knowledge—important as these are—but to bear its fruits in the quality of spirit which its professors exhibit among their fellows. Religion must begin at home. We have been carrying on our discussions even within our own denominational families in an atmosphere of suspicion and hate. We must recall how the disciples once came to Jesus and said, " Master, we found one casting out demons in thy name, and we forbade him because he followed not with us," and how Jesus replied, " Forbid him not, for no man can do a work in my name and speak evil of me." There is our ground of ultimate and only unity, consolidating all the men and women who can do a work in his name. I quote another paragraph from Jacks:

Christianity is richer than any other religion I know of in actable truths. I say they *can* be acted; I do not say they always *are*. None of them are easy to act. But we must carefully distinguish between those that are hard to act and those that cannot be acted at all, but only talked about and argued for. There are some of these latter, and they mark the weak spots. *One of the tasks awaiting Christian theologians today is to sift out those parts of Christianity which cannot be acted and to stand firm on those parts which can.*

There you have it pungently in a paragraph! What happened at Easter of 1928 on the Mount of Olives with fifty diverse nations, can happen in America if Christian leaders have religion enough. Are we big enough to do it? I believe the time is ripe. A brilliant Chinese professor said a year or two ago that Christianity is the most talkative religion in the world. And among ourselves we have well nigh talked it to death. Can we quit it and get down to the actable things? The revival of sound religion waits upon just this thing. Over night, almost, the credit of Christianity can mount to heights if we can change the atmosphere from suspicion and faction to one of confidence. Christ and his religion are not below par—the world, Christian and non-Christian, is clamoring for these—it is the institution that promotes these that is discredited. That is why people do not want to invest. They do not trust *us*. I believe that a hundred men and women could any day start a movement that would bring a great spiritual refreshing to the starved souls of America. It would not be a "campaign" with all its forbidding features. There would be no clatter or vulgarity about it. It would be another council at Jerusalem such

as was called to unify the divided New Testament church, but without that council's authority. This hundred men and women would come together to discover the *actable* things in Christianity. They would frankly recognize their differences, but they would not discuss them. They would purge themselves of all prejudice. They would forget to say, "Unless you believe in this or that doctrine, you cannot be a Christian." They would burn up all shibboleths in a holy flame of prayer. They would rededicate themselves to the great tasks that confront the world. They would hold sacred their own convictions, and leave place for all others to do the same. They would, in short, sit at the feet of Christ and let him say his will to them. And what would be the "findings" of such a conference to publish to the world? I suspect that there would be a confession, a testimony, and a program. The confession would be that they had not fully understood each other before, and that they had come to a finer appreciation of each other. The testimony would be (and how I should like to hear them tell it!) of what Christ had been to them. And the program would probably be a renewed loyalty to the Beatitudes and the Great Commission. That would indeed be "with one accord in one place," and if I were there I should confidently look for the descent of the Holy Ghost manifesting itself in further promotion of impressive unity in word and work, whether I could see the "cloven tongues of fire" or not.

And now reader, I propose to test *your religion.* Suppose in that group of a hundred there should be

Henry Van Dyke and Professor Machen, Jane Addams and John Hayes Holmes, Mark Matthews and Harry Emerson Fosdick, Evelyn Underhill and Professor Conklin, yes, and H. G. Wells and Philip Gibbs and even Bernard Shaw himself, and Dean Inge and one of the Booths of the Salvation Army, and many others of diverse views bearing the Christian name, and (oh, if they would come!) a priest of the Roman Church and another from the Greek—just such a group as that upon which the spirit came at Pentecost—what would be your reaction? Would you sniff and shy? Would you stop your ears and hold for dear life to your "fundamental" doctrines? And suppose all of these men and women without a single exception should frankly say to each other that they committed themselves to Jesus and to his way of life, to the best of their thought and their ability, would you deny them your fellowship? If you should, you will see plainly what I mean when I say that the church of Christ needs religion. Diverse as the views of my group might be, and as impossible as it would be for me to agree with many of them, I should rejoice that all of them were doing just the very thing I am trying to do, namely, to live the life of Christ, to dramatize Christianity as far as possible.

The things we should be agreeing upon would be the *actable* things. News of such a conference would have an electric effect upon the churches and upon the country. I can report, as many another can, that the lay mind and the college mind, teachers and students, have somehow gotten the idea

that the church is futile because of its divisions, that it is afraid to face the realities of science and of life, that it rests upon tradition and miracle and outworn myth and doctrine, that it cannot speak anything with unanimous voice, in short, that it is a decadent survival of the past, and that they must look elsewhere for any help that life may need. The religion of Jesus still challenges the deepest in man and is still sufficient for all men and all their relationships. It is a religion to be acted. Whatever doubts may remain as to the central mysteries of religion and of life, however blurred an answer we get to our questions about the nature of God, of the soul, of immortality, and a thousand and one other things, there stands he, all of God that could appear among men, the answer in experience of every human need, and the assurance to countless millions of man's highest hopes and aspirations. If Christians everywhere believed this and in their lives reflected the Christ spirit, there would have been no bitter controversies, and half the doubt about religion in this troubled age would never have arisen. Meanwhile the new generation has come to maturity, and we, fighting among ourselves instead of together trying to mend a broken world, have not been the help we ought to have been to the most sorely tempted group of young people that ever lived.

Sometimes it looks as though the church has lost most of its best young people. At best, we do well to atone for our mistakes and hasten to the rescue. Philip Gibbs, in his novel *The Age of Reason,* makes a young woman say:

For heaven's sake, leave us alone to worry our way through life as best we may! We utterly decline to be pioneers of a new age, or apostles of a new faith, or martyrs of a new war. We refuse to be psycho-analyzed. Most of us are just rather ignorant, fairly moral, quite intelligent young people, with a sense of humor and normal interests. We try to learn something from our elders but are hopelessly misled. We have open eyes, but no convictions. We don't believe politicians or preachers, but we behave as respectfully as possible and hide our smiles. We like listening to the wireless, but switch off when pompous voices interrupt the music. We prefer to be amused, and we are not worrying about our souls just yet, thank you very much. As for the Age of Reason—perhaps the old people will begin first. We shall be delighted to watch them getting reasonable.

IV

THE NEW EVANGELISM

Socrates is speaking. It is reported by Plato in the *Theætetus*. He has just been refuting an argument of the absent Protagoras, and in fairness to his opponent is undertaking to answer his own argument as Protagoras might.

But I must beg you to put fair questions; for there is inconsistency in saying that you have a zeal for virtue, and then always behaving unfairly in argument. The unfairness of which I complain is that you never distinguish between mere disputation and dialectic; the disputer may trip up his opponent as often as he likes, and make fun; but the dialectician will be in earnest, and only correct his adversary when necessary, telling him the errors into which he has fallen through his own fault, or that of the company which he has previously kept. If you do this he will lay the blame of his own confusion and perplexity on himself and not on you. He will follow and love you, and will hate himself and escape from himself into philosophy in order that he may become different and get rid of his former self. But the other mode of arguing which is practised by the many, will have just the opposite effect upon him; and as he grows older, instead of turning philosopher, he will learn to hate philosophy. I would recommend you, therefore, as I said before, not to encourage yourself in this polemical and controversial temper, but to find out in a friendly and congenial spirit what we really mean when we say that all things are in motion, and that what appears is to individuals and to states. In this way you will see whether knowledge and sensation are the same or different, but not by arguing, as you are

doing, from the customary use of names and words, which the vulgar present in all manner of ways, causing infinite perplexity to one another.

If we change the word " philosophy " in the above quotation to " religion," this would be admirable advice to the Christian church at this very moment. It might even be of value to disputing scientists if we changed " philosophy " to " science." What is sorely needed both in the realm of scientific and of religious discussion is not partisan " disputers " but sound " dialecticians," and the difference between these two, I take it, is that a disputant is a defender of his faith while a dialectician is a searcher after the truth. The disputant's mind is made up, the truth is " once for all delivered " to him, as theologians sometimes say, whereas the dialectician's mind, no less positive in what is believed, remains open to new truth. The disputant has dug in and is on the defensive solely. The dialectician digs in only in emergency, and is constantly on the offensive, ready to advance when the way is open. Now that word " dialectician " has a strange sound to our modern ears, but its meaning is illuminating. I am not so sure of my Greek, but the heart of the word dialectics is " two people talking." In a mere argument or disputation there is only one person talking. You may hear two voices, but the fact that both are often active at the same time shows that neither is hearing what the other says. There is no listening in a disputation, and that is why an argument never clarifies anything. Each partisan is merely, by voice exercise, strengthening his own view. I remember say-

ing to an influential leader in a theological controversy not long ago, "My dear Doctor O., you and I are talking about the same things, only in different language," to which he replied with a toss of his head, "Well, I don't know!" I could not resist the retort, "No, and you are not willing to sit still long enough to learn!"

What Christianity needs right now is dialecticians, and that is the core of what is involved in the new evangelism. We have disputants and exhorters aplenty, preachers who are defenders of truth tightly encased in unchangeable language, but in a questioning age like ours this is not enough. There must be more men who are able to "rightly divide the word of truth." That task is immeasurably complicated by the fact that the truth of God resides not alone in revelation found in a book, but in a vast revelation discoverable in all the works of nature. In a day such as ours, when scientific knowledge is so widely dispersed, when the government's "Science Service" is informing a large circle of intelligent readers what is going on in the scientific world, and when those popular educators, the newspaper and magazine press, are furnishing the public with articles by experts on scientific matters, the high intellectual task of the interpreter is to show that no established truth of nature can possibly be in conflict with established truths of revelation. Since the publication several years ago of James Harvey Robinson's *Humanizing of Knowledge* there has been a noticeable attempt on the part of scientists to bring the facts of science, hitherto held fast in technical

terms intelligible only to the scientist, within the range of the fairly educated mind. I imagine that this has meant a good deal of education to the scientists themselves, since they have made an honest attempt to tell frankly what the terms they use mean.

A good deal of dogmatism and obscurity in both science and religion would disappear if men would define their terms and illustrate their findings.

Religion, too, needs to be humanized. Its realities are expressed by her experts in terms as technical as those of science, and the thoughtful common man can either take them on faith and cry "orthodoxy," or conclude that they contain nothing for him. Here emerges the fascinating task of the interpreter, the dialectician, who having paid the price necessary to master the essentials of science and the essentials of religion, undertakes to show that the truths in each are parts of the same whole. Such an interpreter, eager only to get at the truth, could fairly say to the scientist and to the man using scientific terms: "Now just what do you mean by your terms? What in plain language does that come to?" And the scientific seeker after truth could with equal fairness interrogate the theologian. There is no more effective way to bring disputants out from behind their barricades of terms into the open for a real parley. In a frank, "dialectic" spirit each could put all of his truth on a given subject into a common pool, and together they could "try, prove, reject, prefer" and finally restate a larger truth than either held before.

Moreover the mutual understanding that would be

an inevitable result of such a conference would be a distinct spiritual gain. Such disputants would easily discover which truths of religion were "talkable" and which "actable," and the basis of their understanding and unity would in the end be the actable things. There are matters in both science and religion which can never be settled mathematically, like the nature of energy or the nature of God, and these could be left in the field of speculation where generous disputants could sharpen their wits on them. And, if I am not mistaken, both, in their agreement upon the actable things, would come to a new appreciation of the scientific method by which all truth has come to be known. Science is inductive, it begins with the experience, the act, and very slowly works up to an explanation, a philosophy. Experiments come first, then physics, chemistry, and all the other sciences. Religion does not begin with complete theories but with single experiments. "He that *doeth* the truth cometh to the light." Both science and religion say, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." The yoke comes first, and how could an ox know anything about plowing before he got into the harness and pulled?

The new evangelist will be interpretative, and he is badly needed. The church often reverses the inductive method of science by insisting upon a set of correct views before admitting applicants to its fellowship. The candidate is examined concerning his beliefs. If those beliefs are not satisfactory, he is rejected. Fancy a department of biology insisting that an entering freshman have clear views of

mechanism, vitalism, and entelechy before being admitted as a student! Jesus said that if any man would come into his school he would easily learn of him. People do not go to school because they know but because they want to know, and the earnest attempt to follow Christ will teach them more about his person than all the courses in theology in the world.

What Socrates did for the Greek world of his day needs to be done in our time. Of all the historic figures, he embodied all those qualities that made him one of the greatest evangelists of truth in all time. His wonderful, human spirit, his great incisive intellect, his unsurpassed courage, his humor and playfulness, his curiosity, and his never-failing love of his kind, all these made him the greatest of all human teachers. And how humble was his indomitable spirit! How many times Plato reports him as saying: "You know I am not sure of these things myself, I am only a learner. That is why I am asking you so earnestly." Now Socrates' great accomplishment, through all his discussions and buttonholings was this: He brought all of the science and all of the philosophy of his day down to the solid basis of living. How shall a man act in Athens? What kind of a man ought he to be, in motive, feeling, conduct? What sort of a citizen shall he be? What kind of a neighbor? What is pleasing to the gods? Philosophy to him was a way of life as it should be to all philosophers. That is why he discusses persistently such matters as courage, virtue, knowledge, religion. His illustrations,

like the parables of Jesus, were drawn from the common life that everybody understood. The shoemaker, the joiner, the flute-player, the wrestler, the statesman, and the poet, these were the vivid human figures that were always in the foreground of his mind and to which he constantly referred. Many a high-flown philosophic statement he annihilated by asking how it would work among these common folk.

He, too, was chiefly concerned with the question whether a truth would work, and there was no one in his time to call him a pragmatist, as if that disposed of the matter. Of course the ancient questions were discussed, the talkable matters, such as those mentioned in the quotation at the beginning of the chapter, "What do we really mean when we say that all things are in motion?" "What appears is to individuals and to states"—a rather obscure matter to most of us; "Are knowledge and sensation the same or different?" a somewhat modern matter of discussion, but always his interest was in human life, and however much he would take issue with Protagoras on the philosophical aspects of the latter's famous statement, man was the measure of all things.

Nothing is more needed in our time than exactly this sort of interpretation. Many facts of science have been so interpreted as to degrade the whole moral tone of society. We have watched this false scientific philosophy, this new materialism in the form of the philosophy of self-expression, break down many moral traditions that took centuries to build, shatter every conventionality and sanction,

and often reduce our intellectuals and all who learn from them, to naked fleshly savages. Science has been prostituted and made the procuress of the instincts. I'd like to see Socrates, pop-eyed and snub-nosed, barefoot and ugly, stand upon the campus of any one of our colleges surrounded by all the students with the half-baked philosophies of life which some of their specialist professors taught them, the professors themselves close within the circle, asking his searching old questions about virtue, honesty, courage, and self-control. It would be interesting to see how many would laugh, how many would be convicted of sin, and how many would edge obliquely away as the Pharisees did that day when Jesus asked a leading question. It would be thrilling to see him cracking the shells of their little partial philosophies, their behaviorisms, their mechanisms, their materialisms, their atheisms, and building out of what truths they contain, a living, breathing universe of discourse. For the moral anarchy of the present day wherever it exists, the Christian church is in a considerable degree responsible. Destructive philosophies of life, based upon a section of scientific findings, have not been sufficiently challenged because so few preachers are familiar with the matter and the terminology underlying those philosophies. I realize that it is almost too much to ask a man in one lifetime to become expert in two difficult specialisms, but how can a teacher of religion or of anything else declare his truth without reference to the thought of his time and the language in which it is uttered? Exhortation, however earnest, and de-

fense of the faith, however valiant, will not answer an urgent question based upon some scientific fact. Most of our ministers and religious teachers know little of science and naturally are afraid of what science might do to their faith. A white cow in the dusk always looks like a ghost, unless you know cows. But cows are at their best when they are milked, not when they are run from. There is a lurking fear that at any time science may steal the sacred vessels from the sanctuary, and fear easily degenerates into antagonism. The result is what we see in many places. Two armed camps facing each other in hostility when they ought to be confederates in a common enterprise. One effect of this hostility I think the church must assume the responsibility for. Pastors and parents often complain that when their young people return after a year or two at college they have lost the interest in the church which they formerly had. Naturally they blame this on the college, where it does not wholly belong. It is frequently the case that these young people are not prepared by the teaching which the church gives, to meet the new knowledge that these students acquire in their freshman year. The teacher of religion must be an interpreter. He must, like a good scribe, bring things new and old out of his treasure. That was always the method of Jesus.

Even the brief account of the talk with Nicodemus shows how good a dialectician Jesus was, how he could get what was in Nicodemus' mind and supplement and interpret it by what was in his own mind. How many times earnest Christian students have

asked me: "What am I to do? I am going back to my home church, and I hear nothing there of what I have been learning at college. There is no reference to the great discoveries and the new way of looking at things. Every time my pastor speaks of science it is with a gesture of scorn and a side-glance in my direction. I'd like to go back there and help, but how can I?" I think of another student who came to me with the very same question. She had gone to her pastor previously, and asked his help in relating new things to old, and unable to follow her reasoning, he had cried out: "Oh, you are all head! You have no heart!" That girl I happened to know, though only a junior, was assistant in one of the science departments and was training a class of forty young women for community service in connection with the church. I am afraid my advice was a bit vigorous. It ran somewhat like this: "The trouble is not with your heart but with your minister's head. You know more than he does. If I were you, I should find a bigger and better minister." When I tell you that after a long interchange of views, freely and fully discussed, that girl remarked, "You will never know what this talk means to me," you will see that the harvest is ripe for the interpretative evangelist. I say it again with appropriate apologies for the personal reference, for in this little book I am trying to coin my experience, this generation of young people is in no deep sense irreligious, and not once has response failed when I have talked religion in the terms which they are using every day in their classrooms. As has so often been said,

this is the age of venturous youth that will not submit to intellectual or moral straight-jackets, and one of the dangers that confronts Christianity is that, unless we can translate our religion and our ethics into cosmic terms, we shall have to be satisfied to hand the leadership over to second- or third-rate minds.

At this point I want to say a more specific word about the new evangelism. When we use the term evangelism we think usually of public gatherings in which the truths of Christianity are presented and in which the appeal is made to men and women to follow Christ in open confession. That has always been an accepted method in Christian propaganda. It has often been abused so that to many the mere word evangelistic has a sinister and an almost revolting flavor. A method should not, however, be rejected just because it has sometimes been misused. The older evangelism has still a very large place in the activities of the church. There is something inspiring in these periodical gatherings of earnest people. Some force seems to be liberated when large groups meet together for a definite purpose. Enthusiasm is generated, and action becomes easier in such an atmosphere. Where the preacher is devout, earnest, and magnetic, where the singing is spirited, and where the attitude of the audience is reverent, one is likely to feel the presence of a spirit not felt at other times. Soon the feelings are aroused and awaken sleeping interests within us, and the whole spiritual nature is warmed. We are desperately afraid of feeling, but without it life would be a perfectly dead

thing. No poems would be written, nobody would feel the impulse to make love and to succor the poor, nobody could transcend the hard facts of life with a wholesome idealism, and no scientist could frame an acceptable hypothesis to explain his facts. Scientific theory is the scientist's *feeling* for his universe, and it is often as passionate as a religious experience. One has only to recall Spinoza. Of course there are dangers in arousing feeling, but much more when we brutally stifle them. It is pretty well accepted, I think, that no creative thinking ever occurs without feeling. Now the legitimate appeal of the older evangelism is mainly to the feeling which prompts to action, and properly so.

The new evangelism, as I venture to call it, differs from the older form essentially in the fact that it is interpretative. It more definitely faces the difficulties which confront Christian faith. There are theological and scientific questions that must be resolved before the way is open to faith or feeling. There are great numbers of earnest, thoughtful men and women, who are eager to be religious if, as with Carlyle, they could "be religious with the consent of all their faculties." But they do not believe many things that Christians commonly believe. Perhaps they have found no creed or church with which they can wholly agree. Maybe the churches have said that they could not be Christians until they conformed to the accepted beliefs. What to do about it? Must these good people be lost to the church? We shall wait and pray in vain for these intelligent folk to change to our way of thinking. Thought processes

cannot be altered at will. The more heated our exhortation, the harder those processes become. And just here is the opportunity of the interpretative evangelist, the dialectician, who opens frankly his own mind and invites the questioner to open his.

It is fair play all around. To him religion is not what Gallio thought it was, a discussion only of words and names and a ceremonial law. Evangelism of this type is a fearless venture after reality, perhaps at times a fearsome venture. To cut through old wrappings to get at the naked truth inside is no child's play, and not every man can do it. There is always danger of spilling when you transfer fermenting wine from old skins into new. But the case is urgent and unless something is done the church may be guilty of denying to many persons a religious life or at best of forcing them to live it alone. I recall an incident that occurred in France during the war. There was a gathering of soldiers where the religious interest was pronounced, and where a number of men had made their public confession of faith. At the close one of the men came to me and said, "I am mightily interested in what these men did tonight, and I wanted to do it, too, but I cannot believe everything the church people believe." I replied, "I cannot either, and I do not wish to." He seemed surprised, and I asked: "Give me your bill of particulars. What is it you do not believe?" "I don't believe the world was made in six days," he answered. "Well," I replied, "I wasn't there, but I don't think so either. What else?" "I don't believe Jonah was three days in the whale's belly."

I said: "I wasn't there either, and I don't know what accommodations that whale possessed, but tell me now, where do you find the statement in the Bible that a theory of the creation of the world or of the cubic contents of a whale's inside are necessary to a simple Christian faith? Cannot a man follow Christ without settling such matters as these?" His reply to this I have never forgotten: "But the church people back at home would not receive me if I expressed doubt about these things." There you have it! That man's church had denied him a religious life. I have reason to remember the eager way in which he then and there became a follower of Jesus, for in a few days a piece of the enemy's shrapnel got him, and we talked together no more.

The new evangelism believes that the Christian gospel has nothing to conceal, that it can afford to lay its essential realities on the table beside all other realties whatsoever, and that these can be approached and assessed in exactly the same way that those other realities are approached and appraised, neither spiritual nor material realities being wholly measured by material standards. The new evangelism believes, moreover, that the essential thing in every reality is the energy at its heart, and that the theories and doctrines expressing it are but a provisional device for making that reality intelligible. The new evangelism believes profoundly that if every historic statement of the Christian truths should be shattered, there is at the heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ something that, in no way theological, has been perennially, and remains, the Christian ex-

perience, *quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus.*

And such an interpretative, dialectic evangelism has already been found workable in large gatherings. Assuming whatever risk may be involved in reporting a personal experience, I should like to tell of one such meeting in which I had a part. It was held in a Middle Western university town of ten thousand people and was participated in by six or seven denominations. For some weeks before the special conference, prayer-meetings were held in the churches and in many homes several evenings each week. The definite effort was made by the Christians in this town to get together for a common end, "with one accord and in one place." A cross-section of this working group would reveal the ordinary characteristics to be found in any Christian community. There were conservatives, moderates, progressives, and radicals. The university people interested would naturally look to see if the preacher were at home in the modern world, whether he could present the matter of religion in language congenial to that world; the conservatives, as naturally, were anxious to know whether the values of what they called the old gospel were preserved, and of course those values were associated in their minds with certain forms of expression; in between these two groups was, as always, the large majority, not definitely labeled, who were willing to be shown. The preacher and his message were comparatively unknown to them.

Here I must assume the first personal pronoun, because I want to be clear by avoiding the obliquity

of circumlocution. The first gathering was composed of the members of the cooperating churches and their pastors, and it gave the opportunity for workers and minister to get acquainted. In an extended statement I opened my mind fully and frankly to them. I told them what I believed and indicated the terms of the gospel I should preach. I frankly faced the differences of opinion that always prevail among Christian people, and expressed the hope that our unity would be rather upon "the things preached" than upon unanimity of opinion concerning them. I also fixed the character of the meetings that were to come. They were not to be *my* meetings but *theirs*. While of necessity I must bring a message, they must be entirely free to ask questions and to state opposite views. At all costs there must be complete mutual understanding and sympathy, and these would effectually absorb all differences. Through three weeks that meeting advanced with increasing interest. Each night I found a sheaf of questions to be answered. They ranged in subject all the way from the Virgin Birth to Sunday golf. Once I was soundly scolded by a woman for saying something I did not say. I read the scolding to the congregation and asked them to decide whether I had deserved it, and upon receiving a unanimous vote in the negative, I asked the lady if she would speak with me at the close of the meeting, and if she were not present I requested that anybody who knew her might report the unanimous verdict of seven hundred people.

The questions asked were the usual ones that are

asked nearly everywhere. "Do you believe in the Virgin Birth?" "What is your opinion of evolution?" "How can you believe that God created man in his own image and believe in animal evolution?" "Do you believe in the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible?" "If God is omnipotent, how can you account for sin?" There were many others, but in the atmosphere of fairness that had been created, there was not a single trick question. The inquiries were earnest and expressed real difficulties. I cannot of course tell here in detail how those questions were answered, but of this I am certain, we found a solid fundamental in each case on which differences of opinion could rest in peace. Nobody was bulldozed or bullyragged, and in each case by cooperation of thought and feeling, we were able to distinguish between that truth which always eludes final definition, and the doctrine which attempts to express it. So far as I know, nothing was dodged, and while there was much diversity of opinion, nobody was asked to deny his convictions, and certain it is that an atmosphere of good feeling persisted throughout. I remember that a man of middle age, utterly conservative in his way of looking at things, said to me at the close of the meetings, "Well, I have heard you every night, and some of it sounded a little queer, but it is all right." We were not, I think, thinning out the gospel to a pallid statement that all could believe; we rather made the attempt to go deeper into it to find those depths that no language has ever been able to plumb. We saw that atonement was infinitely bigger than all the theories com-

bined, that the creativeness of God could be manifested by any process, that the divinity of our Lord is cosmic and does not rest solely on any single incident of his earthly life, and that faith is not merely intellectual but the investment of the whole man. I believe we found a new meaning for the word "conservatism," that badly abused word, in discovering that it was a saving of values rather than a finality of terms. A well of living water springing up unto everlasting life will always overflow the vessels that seek to monopolize it.

And here let me suggest that I think that a capital blunder is made whenever in a discussion we fail to face fearlessly the real issues. In seeking for peace we neglect the very bases of peace. The spirit of conciliation can be and often has been overdone. To keep a warlike antagonist quiet we often feed the very fires of his hostility and hate. Plutarch says that when Alexander the Great was advised by Parmenio to attack the Persians during their celebration at night, he replied, "I do not want to steal a victory." In our church life and denominational management we secretly hope to steal a victory by conciliation when in my judgment a frank discussion of the central matters would be much more successful. I mean definitely to say that where reasonable opponents hold any fundamental belief in any form whatsoever, there is a basis deep beneath their phrasings on which they can live peaceably together. The reasonable modernist and the reasonable conservative do not often meet and consequently do not understand each other. Each is guilty of railing at his

opponent, and it is nearly always the guilt of ignorance in more ways than one. And I am citing this special meeting as the most conspicuous instance in my whole life, of the possibility of Christian men and women discussing their most cherished beliefs in a spirit of mutual searching and love. The biggest thing that happened during the meeting I am referring to, and in view of what I have just said, the inevitable thing, was the presence of a spirit in that community, noticeable to all the people there. Men, in and out of the immediate church group, remarked upon it. They talked about it in the shops and on the streets. There had been no excitement. Very little printed advertisement was used. The singing was by local talent. Absolutely nothing was done in the way of artificial stimulation. We tried to open up and talk about the big things of the gospel and of life, and yes, I fully believe it, the Holy Spirit came upon us. I bear my testimony to it. I found matters taken out of my hands more than once. Having planned something, I found myself doing something else. There was an exhilaration in the midst of bodily fatigue, a freshness like a shower over my dry thought, and a sense of the presence of God in a degree I had not known in many years. You will not wonder therefore that I hold the little town of Manhattan, Kansas, in my heart. Its pastors, its church people, its citizen groups, indeed the whole community, made the atmosphere of spiritual revival possible—may the Manhattan idea spread.[1]

[1] On the evening of February 17, 1929, I closed a two-weeks' meeting of similar power at McMinnville, Oregon.

The renascence of religion of which I have been speaking, means the coming of a new spirit upon mankind. The forces that now threaten to disrupt civilization must be met by a vigorous search for those forces that make for a new and sincere humanism. Whatever the causes, the first and final *effect* of religion is to cause men to feel human toward each other. If we could feel toward each other as human beings should, what more can be asked? This is the very heart of every problem, individual, economic, and international that faces us at the moment. It is in an atmosphere of human feeling that the mood to find a way out is born. Disputation with its chips on shoulders tears contestants further apart. All the nicely drawn compacts in the world will not hold together unless deeply embedded in good-will. The Kellogg treaty signed in Paris by many nations is but the crystallization of world-wide feeling about war, but it does force every nation planning aggressive warfare to confront the indignation of the civilized world. To regard it as merely "a scrap of paper" would entail heavier consequences than befell the German Empire in the late war.

Now the point to notice is that human feeling is more profoundly stirred by a dispassionate and fair-minded examination of the facts in any case, than by all the mere exhortation possible. Victor Hugo once said that any man could believe in capital punishment until he had seen a guillotine. The mere sight of the destroying thing causes a revulsion of feeling that becomes an argument. One has only

to look at a starved little baby, anemic and smitten with rickets, in order to form militant convictions about poisoned milk and sunless tenements. Facts are not alone the raw materials of logic; if put together properly, they become the living and illuminating elements of a great emotion. This is true everywhere in art. Pigments and a few bristles from a hog's back are but the instruments with which a painter reveals God to men, as John Ruskin once said. Piece together the starry heavens by the most exact mathematics, and you have the music of the spheres. "I think thy thoughts after thee, O God" was said by an astronomer and mathematician.

The chief function of the Christian church is to produce right feelings in the hearts of men. That is as far as possible from saying that religion is mere emotion, and equally as far from suggesting that we "substitute emotional symbols for propaganda," whatever that nebulous expression may mean. Quite the contrary, the new evangelism proposes the reexamination of the Christian gospel in such sources as we possess. It seeks to find out what were "the things preached" in that early day, that possessed the power to "overturn the world." It proposes to men that use of the historical imagination which would put them back in the crowd about Jesus and ask what was his plain meaning when he said this and that. Such an examination of the facts would render necessary a discrimination between what the gospel was originally and what it later became. Jesus spoke mainly to common people, they heard him gladly and, presumably, intelligently, for

he spoke in homely terms they all understood, and straight to their every-day life. "Back to Jesus" is a very dubious slogan, for there are many pitfalls on the way, but certain it is that every renewal the church has ever had came by this method, though it is as red as radicalism itself. It involves the ancient question "What is Christianity?" the answers to which from the early centuries and at the present moment are legion. Are the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament final for the common man, or are they merely the germinal materials that come to full maturity in the decrees of church councils long afterward? To rediscover the gospel do we go back to Jesus or stop at the Council of Nicæa? We owe so much to that battle royal of the church with the pagan philosophies of those early days that we can quite understand how victory found the church entrenched in a most complicated maze of theology. But that victory was costly, and sometimes it seems as if even now the church is still in that maze and as if her organized units were blindly encountering each other in those twisting ways when she ought to be out and on the march.

All of this has been repeatedly said, and it is perfectly hopeless to expect a unanimous resolution of questions like these, but is there no way out? Is there no common stock from which all the branches have sprung and from which they still draw their life? Every Christian group in the world seeks for the materials of its interpretations in the recorded accounts of Jesus' life and teaching. That is the

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soil from which everything is supposed to spring. There alone, by common consent, the facts are to be found. If we came to these accounts entirely without prejudice, as though we had not been born and reared as Catholics or Baptists, could there be any doubt as to their meaning? What were the facts that Jesus confronted, and just how did he treat them? In spite of every attempt to entangle him in his talk, he absolutely refused to enter into a mere disputation. The facts that concerned him were the pressing facts of human living, like sickness, blindness, a widow's heartbreak over the death of her son, a ruler's grief at the loss of his little girl, worries over housekeeping and the support of the family, children quarreling over their games in the public square, the homely anxiety of a host as to whether he had provided enough for his guests at a pleasure party, and of course all those things like hatred, jealousy, suspicion, love of money, and pride that produce all the misery and tragedy in the world. And he met these facts by saying *things* and doing things. When his authority for saying things was questioned he answered by doing something to validate it. He never argued the academic question of authority. He exercised his power in some way and let that stand as the proof. "That ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins," he saith to the sick of the palsy, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine own house." That was an argument that hair-splitting traditionalists like the Pharisees were not used to.

And when you come to examine what Jesus said,

which is all that anybody has to go by, you discover that he never made a statement of beliefs, never uttered a carefully phrased thesis, but just assumed things, took them for granted, and uttered them with quiet conviction and an amazing self-confidence. He was a bearer of tidings, good news, never a defender of tradition. Indeed, his chief offense was that he often ripped up the heavy wrappings of tradition to get at the truth inside. If instead of searching the Scriptures to find materials for a logical system, as the church has so long done, we ask just what it was that Jesus believed, we discover a very remarkable thing. His creed and his life were so intertwined that it is utterly impossible to separate them. He completely identified himself with what he taught. Consider these amazing statements: "I am the way, the truth, and the life"; "I and my Father are one"; "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me shall never die"; "I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me"; "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life"—and so throughout all of his utterances. To the critics of his day, such utterances clearly proved astonishing and criminal impudence or sheer insanity. There is an unbroken line of such critics even to our own day.

Jesus was the embodiment, the incarnation of the "things" he came to proclaim. Or he was crazy! He claimed an intimacy, even an identity, with God which no other prophet ever claimed. The Jews did not even name their God; he made God a real Father in a sense never known before. Immortality which

had been so inconclusively discussed for centuries among the Gentiles, and which was but a dim hope among the Hebrews, he translated boldly into terms of personality. "I am the resurrection and the life." For the first time immortality appeared among men and in the form of a man. It would have been most strange if he had not risen from the dead! Crazy? Well, you must interrogate history and *current* history, too. No argument can resolve a matter like that. "Redemption," "atonement"—he claimed to embody these, too. And what a man should believe, his "faith," the thing that has vexed the church for centuries, he put it all in one audacious statement: "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Here is the heart of Christianity. However nebulous the statement may sound, Jesus *is* Christianity, and nothing else is. He is the living synthesis of "things" and personality, and the only way to get at the things is by contact with his personality. One might hear him say the things, the truths on which he lived and which he came to declare, and might grasp intellectually every one of them, but he would not *know* them for all that. One must *live* one's way into a great truth about life. Now there is absolutely nothing queer or "mystical" about all this. It happens every day and on all levels of man's creative life. Let me illustrate. Suppose Leonardo da Vinci, that combination of many kinds of genius, were living and had a studio in Greenwich Village, and suppose a man should go to him to learn the principles, the truths of his art as embodied in his "Last Supper" or his "La Gioconda." Would he

really *know* after Leonardo had told him everything about his method that language could hold? It is conceivable that the learner might grasp all the principles even to the minutest details and work them up into a carefully balanced system, but yet possess no *vital* knowledge of Leonardo's art. Art is not logic, and methodology is but the skeleton of art on which living tissues must be woven. What Leonardo might say to the learner is: "The kingdom of art must be entered as a little child. So far, your knowledge has awakened your admiration and your eagerness to learn. The steps are simple though the way is long." And then I think that the first operation of the master would be to clear away the patent misconceptions in the learner's mind, "the leaves and ivy vines" that always cling to the wicket gate entering any kingdom of knowledge. To unlearn is the first step in learning, oftentimes.

By this process a few simple matters would be made clear. And then, I can conceive the master, brush in hand, by a few simple strokes making those first principles plain. Handing the brush to the disciple I can hear the master say, "Now see what you can do with that." What a difference! The very first thing the learner learns is how difficult and how complex a *simple* thing is. It will be a long time before he can acquire "hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play." And so through long years of devotion to the master and consecration in the service of art, the student slowly discovers the method by which all creative experience, all vital knowledge is secured. The steps, as the

master said, are plain, but the effort is costly. Following the *way* pointed out by the great artist with many failures and now and then a half success, keeping everlastingly at it in the presence and under the inspiration of the master, at last a certain skill arrives, and with it the comprehension of the principles he has tried so laboriously to learn, and best of all a deepening and widening artistic life. He has entered the kingdom of art and finds himself adjusted to it and a part of it. Then his own creative nature truly awakens, and the joy of the true artist begins. For such a disciple as this, Leonardo was the way, the truth, the life of art. In everything he paints henceforth somewhere the lineaments of the master will appear, though what he creates is his own.

This is everywhere in the Scriptures the method of Jesus. He knew that living truth could be arrived at in no other way. He had paid the price to learn, and he was quite frank in telling would-be disciples that they must bear a cross if they would come after him. If men would find God, it must be by doing what they conceive to be the will of God, not merely by a study of the "evidences." Christian faith to those early followers was a commitment of their whole lives to his influence. There were no doctrines or elaborate programs, but unmistakably they caught his spirit and began doing the things he did. Somehow an unseen energy began to possess these common men, and the statement became current concerning them that "they had been with Jesus." Much more effective than anything Leonardo had

said or done, was the penetration of the spirit of the master into the being of the disciple during those long years of fellowship. Christianity is Christ, and being Christian is to manifest his creative spirit. Nothing else is Christianity in spite of all the tests.

Now, as lawful and necessary as is the process of intellectualizing spiritual things, the church has criminally overdone the matter. What we have done with this classic statement of Jesus "I am the way and the truth and the life," a statement adequate to approach any kingdom of knowledge or experience, is substantially this: We have smothered the cosmic simplicity of it by writing libraries of turgid stuff on the "Person" of Christ; we have made truth a matter of endless hair-splittings of theological experts, and we have said almost nothing about what bulked largest in the Master's mind, namely life, common, every-day life which he declared he came to enrich. This is what the intelligent world of our day is confused about, and this is the fruitful source of much serious antagonism to religion. Read any one of the multitude of articles appearing daily on religion, and you will find the criticism directed against some view or some practise the church has made essential, that is not essential at all, or the criticism will point out the sections of new knowledge to which religion has not yet become adjusted. Both of these are valid kinds of criticism, and the church must meet them squarely, but not once will you find any writer disposed to criticize any real manifestation of the Christ Spirit. It is that Christ spirit, however indefinable by intellectual terms, that

will win the world if ever it is won at all. If a revival of religion ever comes, Christian faith must be defined in terms of that commitment to Christ which expresses itself in Christlikeness of living, rather than in the tortuous language of theology. Said Diderot: "I have only a small flickering light to guide me in the darkness of a thick forest. Up comes a theologian and blows it out."

V

THE HERALDS OF THE NEW REFORMATION

If we could write the word religion large, most of the difficulties in the way of a renascence of spiritual life would be removed. As the case now stands there are so many interpretations of religion that one must stop and ask which one is correct. The matter becomes intellectual. We have to weigh evidence, and there is much of it. No man could possibly, within the span of an ordinary lifetime, study accurately all of these interpretations, and it is practically certain that he could not come to a conclusion which had no evidence against it. It would be much as if a man were faced by a number of divergent roads and had to decide which was the right one. Before he had examined them all, the night would drop down, and he could search no more. There are twelve living religions in the world today, each with a long history, a complicated theology, and a luxuriant life. The task, therefore, is an enormous one of trying to discover what is fundamental in religion. Does not history, current history even, tell us that these interpretations can never be gathered up into a unanimous reconciliation? Perhaps, after all our disputations, a fundamental lies far below all of our interpretations, as energy is deeper than hypotheses, love deeper than lyrics, life deeper than

all its manifestations, and God infinitely beyond the reach of all mensuration.

But religion, written large, is precisely the one necessary fundamental to every human life. Religion is essentially power, and power is independent of the mere channels along which it runs. The batteries, the wires, the appliances are only the collectors and distributors of electricity, they do not create it. If all our creeds, rituals, churches, and priesthoods were eliminated, religion as an energy might be impeded in its distribution, but would by no means be destroyed. I am pursuing this rather dubious line not to suggest that the historical development of religious institutions has been futile, but to point out two very practical matters that have a bearing upon the whole subject I am discussing. The first, if you will permit a parable, is that the battery and the current of electricity are not identical, and the second is that you may destroy any given battery or all of them, as being hopelessly out of date, but you do not by that act dispose of electricity.

The fault of every church in Christendom has been and is that it insists that its interpretation, its doctrines, and its practises are necessary if one is to achieve religion. That has bred the insularity that characterizes all the religious bodies. Christianity is an archipelago, each island of which is sufficient unto itself and forces an exacting tariff at its borders. It ought to be a continent with a continental consciousness, with its own government, its own traditions, and yet find a larger life in a sense

of the whole. "States' rights" inevitably produces parochialism. There has been a healthy growth of this larger Christian consciousness during the past thirty years, but the fences are still high, and Christianity still lacks the power to cast a unanimous vote on any subject, be it religion, economics, or politics. What Lawrence did for the scattered and mutually hostile tribes of Arabia during the late war, needs to be done among the churches if religion is to become a world-wide human interest. There ought to be some way of making clear to those we seek to win, at least what religion is.

My second word about destroying the batteries was directed to the critics of Christianity. Having acknowledged the fault of the churches in not uttering a unanimous and clear statement of religion, it ought to be said that criticism is often directed against things that Christianity, certainly in all its more thoughtful groups, has long outgrown. The serious critic is as much a searcher after truth as a scientist, and he often stops at the very approaches to religion. I am increasingly astonished at the persistent emphasis that critics, learned in their way, place on such things as Joshua's stopping the sun in its course, the Jonah story, and many other similar matters which progressive Christians long ago have come to understand. I would ask all such critics to quit doing the obvious and rather cheap thing of shooting up old clothes, and make an honest effort to find what the real thing is. No scientist would take seriously a criticism upon the outworn beliefs of science. Those beliefs were necessary and more-

over did their bit to push science along. In a world like ours not even science comes full armed from the head of Jove.

What is the fundamental thing about religion? I despair, of course, of framing an adequate definition where so many brilliant minds have attempted it. I think, however, the matter can be looked at structurally, perhaps biologically. Man is a delicately balanced organism adjusted to the energies of nature. He is like a wheel in a running stream. If the water stops or the wheel loses connection with it, the wheel stops. His bodily organs appropriate the prevailing energies every moment of his life sleeping and waking. Above the bodily life is man's mental and spiritual life, and so interwoven are his processes that no sharp line can be drawn between bodily, mental, and spiritual. They are mutually interdependent. Now whatever *name* you give it, there is a crowning awareness in every normal man from which his whole life proceeds. "Spirit" is a term for it sufficiently non-committal to satisfy the starkest mechanist. Behaviorists, of course, might deny this, but even a stimulus in a full-grown man strikes upon and reacts from a very complicated mental and nervous pattern. A man's spirit, his self, is the latest and finest product of creation, and is as definite as any of his bodily organs; it is, in fact, the controlling organ of his being. That organ, like every other, needs energy for its sustenance and advance, and religion is that energy everywhere available in our world. In using the word "organ" I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not regard

the spirit or soul of man as a separate entity lodged somewhere in the body, flowing along the blood-stream, or situated in the pineal gland, and which might conceivably be isolated some day and put under a microscope. This is plain materialism, and arguments on it are quite futile. Rather, the spirit of man is the sum of all his processes, as real and as elusive as energy itself, and yet, like energy, susceptible of taking a definite form and functioning according to law.

The energies necessary for man's spirit are everywhere potential in our world. Physical nature is a book of revelation if one cares to turn its pages. The eye and the ear are not accurate recording instruments—a tint or a scratch on a diaphragm for every sight and every sound. They, like all other senses, are *organs of interpretation.* They record not only facts but *meanings.* If, as they tell us, all colors are in our eyes, not in nature, then nature (why not say God?) thinks more of the spiritual than of the stark actual, is more of an artist than a mathematician. What Newton, Faraday, Kepler, and Fabre saw in nature was much more than the physical facts. "The poet is the type of all thinkers," says Havelock Ellis. "There is no sharp distinction between the region of poetry and the region of science. Both alike are not ends in themselves but means to higher ends." And J. Arthur Thompson concludes his survey of living things thus: "In fact we find in animate nature far-reaching correspondences to the ideals of the true, the beautiful, and the good—correspondences which may suggest to

some a possible line of development for natural theology." One cannot go with Shelly into a garden without feeling some energy cleansing his emotions:

> The sensitive plant in a garden grew,
> And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
> And it opened its fanlike leaves to the light,
> And closed them beneath the kisses of night;

or with Browning look up at the stars:

> There's heaven above, and night by night
> I look right through its gorgeous roof;
> No suns or moons, howe'er so bright,
> Avail to stop me. Splendor-proof,
> I keep the brood of stars aloof,
> For I intend to get to God!

All art and all science are, in the sense I have named, the instruments of religion in that they possess the capacity to release energy upon the human spirit. Literature, specifically those books that deal with the religious experience of mankind, supremely, of course, the Christian Bible viewed as the record of man's advancing spiritual life; personalities, living and dead, and all our contacts with them, these are the great reservoirs of energy upon which men have always drawn for the culture of their spirits. Above all stands the living Christ, allegiance to whom furnishes the selective quality which enables man to choose out of all life the great survival values. To countless millions he is the way to the meaning of life, to an experience of God, and to that power which makes for salvation. No man is properly ad-

justed to his total environment until he exposes his soul to these sources of spiritual energy. Religion, I repeat, is energy available for our spirits, and all the offices of the church are devices to facilitate the flow of that power. If one cannot find it by use of prevailing devices, let him secure it where he can, for all nature, all life, is at heart religious. One thing is certain: it is not necessary to resolve all of the difficulties about religion, intellectual or other, in order to be religious. Religion is a way of life, like art or science, and one becomes religious by living it. To follow Christ does not involve acceptance of all the church does or thinks, but definitely *does* mean adopting his motives and his principles, and living by them. In the course of doing that, one will naturally come upon all the experience of religion he needs.

If, then, religion is a mode of living, and like all other life, is to be entered not by being a trained philosopher or metaphysician, but by doing successively the things which that mode of life demands, the matter becomes greatly simplified for the common man. St. Paul speaks of "babes in Christ," and babes become adjusted to their surroundings by a process of trial and error. One step is taken at a time, and slowly all the senses become coordinated and in turn assist the body in its coordination. It takes years for the child to get accustomed to its physical environment and other long years to discover the intellectual and moral values. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full grain in the ear." The method of Jesus was wholly inductive,

and if the church could put its challenge where Jesus put it, there would be fewer seminars and more laboratories. This is a laboratory age. We are testing everything, exploring everything, and we are finding out what *works* and what does not work. Instead of asking our age to accept our creeds, what would happen if we asked it to make a few experiments and learn in religion what it learns every day through its physical apparatus? That would be a true scientific approach to religion, and would be an important step in the new reformation of religion. It would be a thrilling challenge to the church and to the world, to all individual and all group life everywhere. Dare we take the first steps toward living as Jesus taught? The very effort would bring on the first stage of revival.

It is to the heralds of this challenge that I should like to say a few frank words. These words may seem trite, even irritating, but seen on the background of long experience they seem to be of pressing importance. I possess no qualifications of either piety or learning that would warrant me in reading a lecture to my fellow preachers, but I think they would be interested to learn that a distinct impression prevails throughout the country that they have not very much to say. Good preachers are at an enormous premium. Good oratory is always rare, and the number of great public speakers in any generation of history is always small. Preaching is a fine art, demanding all the qualifications of any other art, and it is not surprising that great preachers are as few as great artists. The demands upon the

preacher, however, are much more severe than upon the artist. Several times each week the minister must *feed* a considerable group of people hungry for spiritual food, and as the late George E. Horr of Newton used to say, "A sermon is a piece of bread." What food does for the body a sermon must do for the soul. Food properly assimilated repairs waste, increases the supply of life-blood, and furnishes the go and the glow of health.

It is not a forced parallel to say that that is exactly what a sermon ought to do for the spiritual life. In the day's work there is much breakdown of moral, spiritual, and intellectual tissues, and these have to be replenished. Doubts, temptations, and the daily tragedies of our common life leave a "raveled sleeve" which needs to be knitted up. Religious life drags because spiritual lungs are often poisoned by used air lying in unexpanded parts, and because sluggish blood cannot do the offices of cheer and stimulation. Now in every good sermon there is something, whether it ranks as great art or not, that sends the blood singing along the channels of a man's soul, and makes him spring to the life ahead with a new step. "I will speak," said Plutarch, "when that which I have to say had better not be left unsaid." The most blighting criticism I ever heard of preachers came from a fifteen-year-old boy in a class in rhetoric. To illustrate the lesson on force in English style I asked, "Do you like preaching?" "No, sir!" came very promptly and with conviction. "Now," I said, "in the light of the lesson, why don't you like preaching?" The boy thought a moment

and then said, "Because what the preacher is talking about does not seem very important *to him.*"

I need not labor the point further, but what I do want to say is that there is more today for the preacher to say than ever before in all time, and that for the most part he is not saying it. The pulpit in many places is being carried along by the momentum of the church when it ought to be the other way around. There is a woful lack of prophets in this new and bewildering age. While there are so many false prophets crying, "Lo here! and lo there!" there are all too few real prophets competent to say, "Go ye not after them!" It would be easy to cite numerous reasons to account for this state of things, many of which would serve to exonerate the preacher. He is not wholly to blame—the new activities of the church have thrust a situation upon him that is not favorable to prophecy.

When I said just now that the preacher has more to say in these days than ever before, I had a very definite thing in mind. The new knowledge of the universe and of man which science has uncovered contains the raw material for a very substantial confirmation of all our ethics and all the essential things of religion. Somebody will be writing a book before long on *The Findings of Science for Religion.* Many of the terms of science can be brought over bodily into the realm of religion without the slightest violence. Books like J. A. Hadfield's *Psychology and Morals* and *The Psychology of Power,* like W. E. Hocking's *Meaning of God in Human Experience,* and *Human Nature and Its Remaking,* and many

others are veritable treasuries from which a preacher may draw effective scientific support for many matters with which revelation deals. Revelation becomes testable reality when confirmed by the structural facts of nature.

I do not, of course, think that spiritual realities can ever be fully translated into scientific formulæ, any more than the Parthenon can be wholly reduced to architectural mathematics, but spiritual realities, in their quality as experience, can be shown to be "in accordance with the constitution and course of nature," to use Bishop Butler's phrase. My frank word to one very large class of ministers is that they cultivate the scientific way of looking at nature and at man. Most preachers are not willing to pay the price to do this. They either look for easy illustrations or pick flaws in some scientific hypothesis. A book lies before me entitled *Questions Evolution Does Not Answer.* The author makes his case. Of course there are many such unanswered questions, but suppose somebody should write a book on *Questions Theology Does Not Answer,* would the establishment of a double negative do any good? There is no need to be on the defensive about a large section of scientific truth, and a positive, sympathetic attitude toward this will greatly enrich a preacher's message. There is a very wide-spread suspicion against science as such, on the part of preachers, which is alienating the most intelligent people among Christian congregations. These people have been to college and are familiar with many of the discoveries and the terms used in comprehending them,

and moreover the press is teeming with these matters all the time. Nearly every preacher is faced by a group of people who know something, just enough perhaps to cause confusion, about complexes, inhibitions, behaviorism, the endocrine glands, and their influence on personality, stimulus and reaction, and a thousand other scientific terms, with the destructive philosophies which often accompany them, and he ought to know enough about them to interpret them positively. This does not mean turning the sermon into an amateur lecture on science, but, on the contrary, such knowledge furnishes him with an understanding of what people are thinking about that is the very challenge of all preaching.

Preaching is always and solely the incitement to living in the manner of Jesus, and the preacher will always have the task so to interpret new knowledge as to remove the difficulties in the way. The average preacher is not aware that a furious battle is raging among scientists at the moment which threatens the very personality, the mind, the soul of man. I suspect that we are having so much difficulty with the personality of God because the personality of man has been so gravely questioned in scientific circles. I insist that such matters as these, in greater or less degree, are the pressing concern of even the average preacher. They are not things that can be fought out in little groups of extremists. Nearly every church has a sprinkling of persons with intellectual curiosity who are captivated by these new studies. There are venturesome students in every congregation who are well up on these subjects.

Since education has become so largely social, there is not a very great body of dangerous thinking among students, but they have a perfect genius for scenting the striking heresies of the hour and are quite likely to do considerable strutting about it. The encouraging thing is that they are so very serious about it. Now what would a pastor say to a question like this from an undergraduate: "Man is a mere automatic mechanism, isn't he? He has no control over his actions. He just responds to stimuli, doesn't he?" Intellectual sympathy in such a case means everything. A wise counselor, what Socrates called himself, a mid-wife, might bring to birth a great leader in circumstances like this.

Perhaps the vast majority of preachers need to acquire this scientific way of looking at things, and that does not mean becoming a technical scientist. Every fairly educated man has had the rudiments of the basic sciences like chemistry, physics, biology—enough at least furnish him with a working method. Let the preacher set himself to the reading, and the reading *all the way through*, of a score of really great books available; let him seek the counsel of some scientist to clarify the obscure places, and let him keep at it until he knows what it is all about, and there will in time come the consciousness that the real gospel of the spirit rests upon cosmic foundations. If the preachers who hope to set up Christianity by knocking down scientific hypotheses would call a truce upon this futile word-war, and go into retirement long enough to gain a scientific method of viewing reality, religious and secular, there would

drop down upon the world a deep quietness which would be the harbinger of a great spiritual awakening.

To a much smaller group of ministers, namely the progressive, I should also like to venture a word. The preacher who can be modern in his thinking and yet preserve all of the evangelical truths of the Christian gospel is the preacher just now most needed. Far more important are the truths of the gospel of Christ than any intellectual appraisal of them. It is not enough that one should have intelligent views on all the moot questions of religion. He must have a gospel that possesses the energy to do for men what a gospel is supposed to do. To be modern in thought and religious in spirit is a rare combination. To rationalize away all the mystery of religion is not to be soundly modern. It is merely to be modernistic, a much weaker quality. At the heart of science and at the heart of religion is ever the inscrutable mystery which always eludes accurate measurement and yet which unfolds both in nature and in the lives of men in definite and definable expression.

The remark that is oftenest heard about the modern-minded preacher is that he has no gospel, that his mind does not show the marks of grappling with these great central mysteries, and that in his attempt to make the Bible and religion intelligible he has pulled down much more than he has built up. The sermons of such a preacher are often unsatisfying, they reach the head but rarely the heart. The Christianity which that type of modern preach-

ing portrays is little more than a pale ethic tempered by the softer colors of art. It is likely to make of Christ one of the great religious leaders rather than the Saviour of men; it is as likely to regard the cross on which the Saviour died as an incident much like similar sufferings in the lives of all heroes of the truth, and it is likely to forget that the great religious experiences of God, of conversion, of divine leadership and of the access of divine power in the souls of men, are cosmic in their nature. It was such an emasculated gospel that a preacher once essayed in the thronging streets of Whitechapel, when a Scotch woman of the streets cried out to him, "Your rope is nae lang enough for the likes of us!" After exhausting the riches of an unusual mind in the attempt to proclaim his gospel St. Paul cries out in the ecstasy of despair, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" It is always so with our great realities; they are to Jews a stumbling-block and to Greeks foolishness, but nevertheless it has always pleased God by the foolishness of the things preached to save such as believe. The preacher must always add to his office of expositor and interpreter that of the herald who announces the deep things of God.

The outstanding herald of the new reformation is the teacher, particularly the teacher of science. It is science with its marvelous apparatus that has heaped up all the new materials, and it is to the scientist we have a right to look for the new structure in which man must henceforth live. It is not enough that a teacher be master of a section of

knowledge, it is imperative that he become an interpreter, that he piece together as far as possible for himself, as well as for his students, the world of knowledge of which his specialism is a part. It is for the lack of this that so much of the present antagonism exists both between sections of scientific knowledge and between science and religion. During the past half-century science has struck gold in a thousand veins in the heavens above and in the earth beneath, and most of the scientists with new and cunning apparatus are busy getting out the ore which is piled in heaps everywhere. It takes a deal of patient, discriminating philosophical minting before the coinage is ready for circulation in the marts of men, and the coiners are few and far between. No amount of special training in digging can of itself qualify a man to create a coinage on which the solvency of man must rest. Prof. Wilhelm Ostwald says a timely word at this point to those who are likely to become bewildered by their riches:

> We are entering upon a new era. A man must be a specialist in the beginning, of course. That constitutes a necessary preparation. Yet the real importance of special work is that it provides material for the generalizer. An array of technical facts constitutes after all only the brick and mortar. Philosophical interpretation of these facts is all essential to the erection of the complete structure.

Teachers often follow the line of least resistance and are content to be masters and dispensers of a limited section of knowledge, shifting the responsibility for meanings to others. If education is preparation for the adventure of life, it is difficult to see

how such teachers can be called educators at all. Teachers themselves are beginning to complain that such mere investigators belong in the laboratories where nature can hold her own, rather than in the classrooms where human nature is more or less at the mercy of the teacher. Havelock Ellis in his *Dance of Life* says some biting words of such scientists:

> Unfortunately so many of the people who masquerade under the name of "men of science," have no sort of title to that name. They may be doing good and honest work by accumulating in little cells the facts which others more truly inspired by the spirit of science may one day work upon; they may be doing more or less necessary work by the application to practical life of the discoveries which genuine men of science have made, but they themselves have just as much and no more claim to use the name of science, as the men who make the pots and dishes piled up in a crockery shop have to use the name of art. They have not yet even learned that science is not the accumulation of knowledge in the sense of piling up facts, but the active organization of knowledge, the application to the world of the cutting edge of a marvelously delicate instrument, and this task is impossible without the widest range of vision and the most restless fertility of imagination.

The influence of the teacher in framing the thinking of students and their attitude toward life is a hundredfold greater than that of the minister. What is an hour or so a week with the preacher, if he even has that, against every day in the week, months on end, with the teacher in an academic atmosphere? Science is essentially analytical—it takes things to pieces, thereby destroying the very thing it analyzes. You cannot reduce water to hydrogen and oxygen,

and still have water. Modern science in its search for the constitutive elements of all things, chemical combinations and life as well, has dissolved our moral systems and our conventionalities, and unless the scientist reassembles these things, we are left at the mercy of raw instincts. That is exactly what has produced the present age of moral lawlessness in old and young. It is incumbent therefore upon teachers to put together again, in finer combination, what they have taken to pieces. If Moses is out of date, modern psychology and sociology can reconstruct every one of the Ten Commandments. That moral code will then be seen to be not merely a revelation handed down from heaven, but the crystallized experience of centuries in transforming human instincts. Sin is failure to transform an instinct. An instinct is natural, of course, but the expression of an instinct at the cost of another instinct is highly unnatural. Love is a glorious natural instinct, but Helen and Paris have no right to involve Troy in a ten-year destructive war. Self-realization, the harmonious play of all the instincts, must regulate self-expression, and it is the business, perhaps the first business, of the educator to call attention to this fact constantly.

Whether they like it or not, all teachers, in virtue of the basic fact that they are handling truth in one realm or another, are evangelists, and ought to have an eye constantly on what their truth is doing to the students they teach. There is a sense in which the teacher's task is much more solemn than that of the preacher. Certainly I do not ask a teacher of physics

to open his lecture with two stanzas of hymn 32, and to close it with the benediction, but a man who deals with energies ought to have some remote conception of the energies that operate upon human nature. A man cannot handle laughing gas or the secretion of the thyroid gland without seeing what chemistry may do to human personality, so close is the relationship between physical and spiritual things. I realize perfectly that most teachers resent the idea that they are supposed to be responsible for the conduct of those whom they teach. They have spent much time in becoming expert in their fields, there is much to do to keep abreast of their subjects, there are books to write, and in short quite enough to consume twice the time at their disposal. Let somebody else wash Johnnie's face and manicure his morals! That attitude of mind discloses a serious situation that has prevailed in education for many years. It comes to this, that teachers are more interested in their subjects than in the human beings they teach. A successful experiment bulks larger than success in man building. Education in America has run to equipment for scientific research, and teaching has become an exclusive vested interest. Professors must not be expected to bother too much with the crudities of raw boys and girls. They teach their subjects handsomely, and the students may "take it or leave it."

Mark Hopkins on one end of a log and a boy on the other makes a university, but Mark Hopkins cannot sit on innumerable logs and do a job of wholesale incubation in these piping days of popular edu-

cation. It is none the less true that education that does not effect the shaping of students, intellectually and morally, is no education at all. Nor can the student's moral and spiritual training be turned over to a department, within or without the faculty, especially devoted to these matters. Students everywhere as a class resent every effort to make them moral or spiritual, and activities designed to accomplish this result are laggardly pursued where required, and almost totally neglected where voluntary. Religious activities on college campuses are for the most part in a sadly depleted state. Religious workers on college campuses are valiantly holding the fort, but it is an unequal battle. And yet I have reason to know that no subject interests the college student so much as religion. It is a queer situation, and the only path I can see into it, is for the teachers, the great specialists along with all the rest, to recognize their office as interpretative, to acquire a truly "humanistic" spirit in becoming interested in shaping human beings, and in building for their students a universe in which moral and spiritual forces interplay harmoniously with physical forces. There is something at the heart of every truth in the hands of a real interpreter, be it in entomology, physics, or astronomy, that possesses the power of awakening the mind and also the spirit. All knowledge, seen even dimly on the background of the whole, possesses a spiritual quality, that is to say, passes from logic to wonder, which brings it close to the region of art and of religion.

I am not asking, I repeat, that teachers turn aside

to expound religious tenets, but the public has a right to demand that they mellow their learning into reverence. "The irreverent astronomer is mad." The irreverent teacher is much more dangerously so. In this connection there are two things, it seems to me, which teachers should constantly remind themselves of. The first is that all teaching is personalized teaching. Along with what he teaches something of the teacher's spirit is laid down in the student's mind. No man can merely teach a subject. Subjects are carriers of personality. "How can I hear what you say when what you are keeps ringing in my ears?" Not only the raw material of the teacher's knowledge makes its impact upon the learner but what that material has done to the teacher's spirit. "Preaching," said Philips Brooks, "is the proclamation of truth through personality," and teaching is exactly the same. To be worthy in spirit and character of what one grasps intellectually, is an ideal not always realized. The votaries of truth should not, like the augurs, laugh in their sleeves. It is the leaven of personality much more than the influence of new knowledge to which the student is always exposed.

The second thing lies at the heart of pedagogy itself. New knowledge, like new furniture, always upsets the house. The task of the housekeeper is to get the new adjusted to the old. Much of the furniture in the house has done honorable service and is still useful if placed aright. It would be very poor management to jam a whole vanload of new and strange pieces into the house, smashing things

right and left. Yet it is just this sort of thing that is often done by the clumsy teacher, who does not know how to shift the intellectual furniture of the student to make room for the new. His material may be of the soundest, and his method theoretically perfect, but it is a very delicate pedagogy which is involved in slowly getting rid of the outworn furniture, tactfully placing the new articles until the house with its old and its new contents is in order. Physicians do not feed their patients or perform operations upon them without knowing something of their digestive processes and their powers of resistance. The careless teacher often undermines the religious and moral faith of students by not knowing what is already in their minds. No teaching can be called skilful that neglects matters of this kind. In an age like ours of bewildering amounts of new knowledge, which must be related to what we already possess, it is the teacher more than the preacher who can find for us the way out. I bear grateful testimony to the many teachers throughout the country whom I know to be engaged in just this sort of ministry to their students, and it is they and others like them who are hastening the new spiritual awakening.

To those responsible for what is now known as religious education, my observation leads me to make a brief deliverance. This group includes theological seminaries and students, schools of religion, Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A., teachers of the Bible in colleges, and those who have the care of religious training in our Sunday schools and churches. I have

said enough in this book to indicate my entire sympathy with all that effort to restate the essential things of religion in scientific terms, and certainly I could find no valid objection to the application of the scientific method to the teaching of religion. That vocabulary and that method are absolutely necessary to any intelligible exposition of spiritual realities, and yet at the risk of being regarded as a hopeless reactionary, I confess I have considerable doubt as to the success of some of the present efforts at religious education. I welcome any appliances so long as they are applied to the proper end. The test of the new radio is whether the message gets through, and new plumbing is judged by the amount of water it can administer. Appliances, like radios, plumbing, scientific methods in all fields, are never ends in themselves. Education, religious education not excepted, sometimes goes to the head, like wine, and perspectives become disarranged. Religion goes to the heart, the sources of a man's being, and educational method is only valuable if it assists to that end. My fear is that with the acquisition of new views and new methods in religion, we shall feel that the ultimate end has been gained. In that case we are substituting a dry intellectualism for the access of power which religion essentially is.

Let me be forgiven once more for recounting a personal experience. I was asked by a teacher of religious education in an important university to speak to his class which was about completing a year's work in the study of the Bible. I knew that the teacher had originally been a decided conserva-

tive in his thinking, and having attended a Middle Western divinity school, had become a pronounced progressive. The change had left his nerves somewhat raw, so that he could not refer to the views he once held without violent irritation. I suspected that his teaching would reflect his own intellectual conflict. In my remarks to the class I said: "You have been studying the Bible for some months and I should like to raise the question as to how much you know of the Bible. The Bible, for instance, is a book of religion. Are you more religious for studying it? I understand that you have arrived at intelligent conclusions concerning myths, miracles, the Virgin Birth, Jonah, and Creation; but the men of the Bible were vividly conscious of God. Have you found your sense of God deepened, or are you, like so many others, questioning whether there is a God at all, or if he can possibly be personal? The men of the Bible were characterized by a life of prayer. Has your prayer life been enriched by this study, or are you asking whether prayer is rational in a universe like ours?" By this time both the students and the professor began to look startled. Medical books ought to make better doctors, and engineering books ought to make better engineers. Certainly a religious book ought to make a man more religious. Nobody wishes to go back to the old hit-or-miss method of teaching the Bible, but no amount of new method is of any avail unless it brings within reach the reservoirs of power which the Bible contains. New views and methods are keys to unlock those reservoirs, and are useless for any other purpose.

Christianity is Christ, and being a Christian is being Christlike. That is the great end toward which all our method tends. Religion is power and life, and that life alone is the light of men. We not only need to think right, but to be right and to do right, even as the Master himself did.

Absorbing educational and scientific methods for use in teaching religion has played havoc with a good many workers in this field. They have become bound hand and foot with the grave-clothes of terms, so that the content of those terms is quite lost. I think of a graduate of one of our most approved theological seminaries, who literally dripped with these terms, and whose preaching was as dry as Gideon's fleece. He could not fetch a scuttle of coal except by the " project " method. I have been in many conferences of Christian workers, and I note an increasing tendency on the part of many of them to become intellectualistic, to bring over the vocabulary of their graduate studies, often to the obscuring of religious values. The scholar must be merged in the Christian disciple, never the disciple in the scholar. By all means let us have the best thought-forms, the best methods in teaching religion, but let us make them the servants of great Christian living, and never allow them to become our masters.

The times are ripe for a new *Principia,* that will do for the universe of spiritual forces at play in man's environment, what Newton did in bringing all the diverse movements in the heavens and in the earth into a simple harmonious system. Psychic forces there indubitably are, and yet material science

has not yet included them in the known systems of energy. The heralds of the new awakening must struggle through accretions and obstructions of whatever sort to reach a common ground somewhere at the basis of things, from which man's advance on all the levels of his life may be unified. Christian faith then, like scientific faith, will not wholly inhere in theory but will be seen as the commitment of the whole man to the quest of truth. I am profoundly convinced after many years among college people that they are not unfriendly to religion, and that they await eagerly an interpretation that they can acccept. I think also that a new mood is discernible among the students of the country. Youth is always volcanic, but even volcanoes cool sometimes.

The era of unrestrained liberty has taught many lessons, and I am convinced that as the lava slows and the volcanic dust clears away, this generation of young people will chart a safer and a straighter course than ever before. My friend, Prof. George P. Conger, of Minnesota, once said to me: "One thing is sure. On the front line of man's evolutionary advance stands Christ and his way of life. Following his ideals there will be no fear for mankind." If the church can say this and this alone, with fair unanimity, I believe the challenge will be met.

VI

THE GOSPEL OF THE NEW RENASCENCE

I must content myself here with barely mentioning the elements of the Christian gospel that seem to me to be necessary to that message which has the potency of awakening the souls of men. Anything else would require a whole volume. Such a gospel will not alone reach up to the airy regions of metaphysics and systematic theology, but deep down into the very structure of the universe and of man. It will advance few theories, but everywhere it will attempt to meet real human situations. It will declare a good deal more than it will prove, and it will risk the validity of what it declares on the test of experience, more than on the finality of logic. That was the way of Jesus. His answer always to their arguments against his astounding claims, was the challenge to follow his way of life, to live the matter out rather than merely to think the matter out. Any gospel that can shake this age to its foundations must be cosmic, structural, universal in its nature. It will include all possible theologies and transcend them. The heralds of this new awakening will have no time to waste in breaking the theological cups in which men carry their water of life. Like explorers, they will utilize every cache that has any food in it, but will resolutely set their faces toward the great unknown and uncharted territory long after the last

cache has been passed. There will be no " right little, tight little " theological packages in which this gospel will be handed out. It will be a gospel in which " things that are not set at nought things that are." To the hard logician, what Carlyle would call the " logic-chopper," it will be no gospel at all, but it will possess elements as absolute and as concrete as the time-space continuum, as elusive and as definite as energy or motion or life, no one of which can ever be defined but all of which are the ground of all experience. This is a high standard to set, and yet I must proceed to itemize the elements as I see them.

First of all, then, religion will have a cosmic connotation. Interplay of forces, transformations of energy, by these, all the phenomena of our universe have unfolded. Religion will appear as man's sharing of all those energies that make for his spiritual growth and advance. Wherever a life exhibits the qualities of spirituality, whatever the beliefs or practises, there will be found religion, and upon this every effort will be made to build. No bruised reed will be broken, and no smoking flax will be quenched. Nowhere on this planet at any time has the living person of Jesus done aught but stimulate men in all the reaches of their being, and in preaching Christ we shall be asking men of every nation and of every culture to expose themselves, not to historic Christianity primarily, but to Him who is mighty to save.

The God of the new awakening must be adequate to the infinite universe which science has brought into view. Attributes drawn from revelation will

have a new validation as they meet their confirmation in God's other revelation in nature, for the whole creation is God's self-revelation and unfolding. Cosmic energy in all its manifold ways of acting, deduced by the scientist as the laws of nature, reveals clues as to the creativity, omnipresence, immanence and transcendence, permanence and personality, that may not be mathematically proved, but which lay heavy responsibilities on him who denies them. We must value our symbols of God, even our literalisms and anthropomorphisms, but we must expand them to the dimensions of the new universe. The all-pervasive, indeterminate, indefinable, restless energy of nature, creator and sustainer of all things, author and finisher of myriads of complex forms, ever unseen but always available to the humblest searcher who will obey its laws, gives meaning to the statement of Jesus that God is a spirit. The Christian believes that all the energies and all the processes discoverable by silence, are but the tools with which God has made everything that exists, and that He himself must far transcend in his person all that he has created. "The voice that moves the stars along speaks all the promises."

I feel sure that the message of the new religious revival will be redemptive, in all that that term implies. Dismiss every scheme of atonement that the mind of man has fashioned. Call them all illogical and inadequate, and yet, I think, in a world like ours the Cross of Christ will stand supreme, not only as a pale symbol, but as one of the eternally pregnant facts of history. In the realm of person-

ality, as in the whole reach of the universe, it will appear as that agony which is creative. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now" is an accurate picture of all the cosmic processes. All that violent and destructive interchange of energy in physical nature, and among living things, all that struggle, pain, and destruction by which species advance, are explicable only by the results attained. Whatever the waste, there are great ends attained such as orderly systems, life, mind, and personality. Blind forces cannot create just because they are blind, and law has no meaning apart from intelligence. The Cross of Christ, on any hypothesis or on none, will ever seem the symbol and the fact of God's redeeming love to mankind, and we can still say that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." As the crowning revelation in time of the nature of God, the Cross stands high and lifted up, like "a peak in Darien."

There will be forerunners like John the Baptist in the new reformation, crying: "The axe is laid at the root of the trees! Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Sin will be seen as that maladjustment which wrenches the machinery of all life, individual and social, out of gear. There will be prophets like Nathan to say to the kings on their thrones of power and privilege, "Thou art the man!" Stanley Hall said twenty years ago that while the church is growing euphemistic about sin, science is preaching sin with terrific eloquence. Biology and psychology will tell of bodies and minds out of harmony with their proper environments, and

sociology with her sister sciences, will trace all war, all economic injustice, all racial hatreds, all poverty and suffering among men, to the violation in group life of the essential morality of the universe. Conscience will emerge not as the overlay of traditional complexes, but as a structural organ in individuals and in society to report the gains and losses, and to point out man's cosmic direction.

Repentance and conversion will mean what they have always meant, but on the cosmic foundation which science enlarges, they will seem even more poignantly true. Repentance is change of mind and change of feeling and purpose, that inevitably spells reconstruction—to use the Christian term, conversion. Psycho-analysis is finding the root of evil in men's minds, and by removing it, is liberating healing energies upon body and mind. Religion will seek in quite as scientific fashion, to reach the "trauma," the mental and spiritual wound, and make available the energies of the spirit, within and without. In physical and mental healing as in moral recovery, old things will pass away, and all things will become new.

The nature of man's structure lends itself to these deepest of all experiences. The most glorious thing about all forms of life is their capacity to advance, to draw more and more heavily upon nature's limitless storehouses, until transformation comes. Everywhere the material environment beckons upward and those forms of life which adapt themselves ever grow into richer existence. For man's mind and spirit religion will point out that there is a "fitness

of the environment," too (to use Professor Henderson's phrase), vast riches of the spiritual world ever at his disposal. Science as well as theology will have to cancel much of their literalism and learn to interpret such great statements of the Bible as this: "That they seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from each one of us; for in him we live and move, and have our being."

Immortality and the future life will be a chief concern of the new spiritual awakening, but it will not be debated in the old, futile, academic way. The most that can be done is to find out whether in any appreciable degree, permanency of personality rests upon a cosmic foundation. There will be no proofs. Granting, however, that belief in immortality is a matter of faith, like the scientific man's faith in atoms, electrons, and the ether of space, it may fairly be asked whether, in a universe where no discoverable item of physical energy ever escapes, but merely assumes new forms, the far finer products of the spirit emerging at the crest of all creation in man, may not also be permanent and susceptible to new forms. Science and religion equally walk by faith and not by sight, and in the new era for which I am hoping the two will be comrades in the great exploration.

Prayer will be the life breath of the new reformation, but it, too, must undergo an immense expansion. Here again we must cease warring over our pretty skepticisms, and put the matter on an inductive basis. Prayer, however explained, is too

considerable an individual and social force to dismiss lightly; there are too many "atmospheres" created by it, like electro-magnetic waves in the ether, not only within a person but far beyond him, to make the summary label "subjective" quite adequate. If prayer accomplished nothing but the subjective results, that would be a sufficient justification for it, but it does far more than that. It is difficult to see that in a universe as sensitive as ours, in which energy waves can carry a photograph across three thousand miles of ocean, there may not be borne upon similar energy waves a burden far finer. Scientists are fearfully afraid of the term psychic, but the day is not distant when physics will be adducing far subtler forces to account for the behavior of the well-known physical forces. Sometimes a wanderer in the desert stumbles upon a burning bush and out of it hears the voice of God. I think that all science at the moment is trembling with expectancy or fear on the frontier of the new promised land, but is all too timid to enter upon it.

Be that as it may, an inductive basis for prayer must be found, if possible. Is not prayer the organ of man's spiritual advance? If, as Bergson puts it, the brain is the organ of attention to life, all that activity which is gathered up in the term prayer may be regarded as the organ of attention to spiritual life. It is the outreach of the whole being for new levels of power. It involves much more than mere words. It rather makes of words a sacrament, the outward sign of an inner condition, enlisting thought, attitude, character, and activity in the

search for larger life. Have not all living things advanced by a similar investment? Is not prayer the expression, on the spiritual plane, of all that upward urge that life everywhere reveals answering to the upward call of its environment? Just as the scientist seeks to know the will of nature, and in doing it finds all nature's forces at his behest, so man seeking to know the will of God and finding it, comes into cosmic power and fellowship. As in the pursuit of natural forces more is to be learned from experiment than from theory, so prayer will justify itself more by practise than by intellectual comprehension. However a man may define God—complex of processes, time-space continuum, or the loving heavenly Father—he could, indeed he cannot help it, pray this prayer, "O God, help me to find myself, that I may find my true place in the world." That would be an experiment, indeed, for it involves adjustment to and a sharing of the marvelous energies of the universe which is the very soul of communion with God. Then would the words of Jesus have a real meaning: "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all things shall be added unto you."

Discerning readers of this chapter will have observed that what I have named as the essentials of the gospel of a new reformation is what is familiarly called the old gospel. It is as far from the old theology as words are from things, terms from realities. No question of orthodoxy can properly arise, because, as I believe, they are *elements* which can only give faint reverberations of their immensity, when reduced to language. In Christ all of these great

realities inhere, and in preaching him as the Saviour of mankind, we are preaching all the gospel he ever taught.

One other matter I must touch upon before my task is completed. What is meant by a religious experience? So many strange meanings, from the philosophical to the pathological, cling to the skirts of this word, that one must repress the impulse to shudder when experience in religion is brought forward. Is experience, like "reality" to the philosophers, a shadowy thing so that we can never be quite sure when we have it, or is it a gushing mud-geyser of emotion that overspreads and spoils all the surrounding landscape? Neither of these extreme views should discourage us, because in spite of the fact that we never know just what we are experiencing, and just what is happening when we do experience it, all of our knowledge and all of our life is just one succession of reports that something "out there" is registering "inside" of us. Our every-day experiences are all such vivid reports, and we think we are quite clear about them until we begin to examine them closely. The movement of my pencil over the page and the gorgeous sunset that meets my eye as it comes across the lake at my feet, are both experiences, but if I attempted to explain these things scientifically, I should have a good deal of trouble with nerves and brain centers, muscular action and the nature of light. I have run into this fog to suggest that we must not demand too much explanation of even the commonest experiences.

But there are features of practical certainty over

the greater area of our experiences, and it is a valid demand that we make in asking that religious experience be made clear also. We may summarily dismiss all those hectic, emotional experiences that go by the name of religious experience, but we should be chary of estimating even those experiences by our own emotional index. Evident and violent emotional "jags"—to use a pictorial but accurate term—sought as ends in themselves, as some people get intoxicated, can have no more scientific value for religion than the ecstasy of a whirling dervish. All people do not feel alike in their love or their religious experience, and it is not an easy matter to decide when such an experience is sincere, and well grounded. The church has sometimes prescribed the speed and intensity of emotion as the standard, and this has done much to give religious experience its bad name. Some things cannot be standardized, and it is as much a mistake to consider one unequal to a religious experience because he cannot conform to an emotional test, as it is to regard a certain quality of feeling as necessary to that experience. A religious experience is in no sense different from any other revolutionary experience, perhaps no different from any ordinary experience, unless the objects of the experience are incapable of arousing deep feeling. Objects vary in their potential emotional content, but given an object worthy to arouse a man's deepest interest, just what would happen to him in coming into an experience of it?

Let me take as an illustration the poetry of Robert Browning. Browning is not easy to know, and many

there are who after repeated attempts have given up the effort. He, however, is big enough and difficult enough to serve as an excellent example. First, then, would come the mastery of Browning's vocabulary and style. One must read Browning and read him courageously, even doggedly. Browning himself said once that he did not care to write a book that anybody could pick idly from the library table and understand. His style is difficult, many of his words unusual. His total disrespect of conjunctions, relative pronouns, and other connectives, and all that style which he called dramatic, which, for the beginner, often means confusion as to who is talking, make the mastery of Browning no "pastime of a drowsy summer's day." Patience, however, will ultimately result in the student's acquiring the mechanics of Browning's mind. The first thing therefore is the mastery of Browning's style.

The second thing that would follow from a prolonged study of the poet, would be a grasp upon his ideas, his philosophy of life. And what a philosophy of life! Into that embattled nineteenth century, where back and forth the struggle swayed for all that men hold dear, he came like his own "Echetlos," the "wielder of the plowshare" at the battle of Marathon:

But one man kept no rank and his sole arm plied no spear,
As a flashing came and went, and a form i' the van, the rear,
Brightened the battle up, for he blazed now there, now here.

. . . . . .

Did the steady phalanx falter? To the rescue, at the need,
The clown was plowing Persia, clearing Greek earth of weed,
As he routed through the Sakian and rooted up the Mede.

It was Browning's sheer spiritual robustness that turned the tide for many who were wavering in their faith in spiritual reality, and that vigor is not diminished even unto this day. His "philosophy" was a poet's vision, and he sang what he saw. He puts his creed in a sentence. Describing himself, he says in "La Saisiaz": "Why, he at least believed in Soul, was very sure of God." The second thing, then, after mastering Browning's form is to lay hold upon the substance of his message, the things that in all life were central to him. The third thing that would unfailingly occur in the effort to know Browning's poetry, would be the discovery of Browning himself. Art in all its forms, literature, painting, sculpture, and all the others, is the incarnation of living personality. Word becomes flesh and dwells among us. One cannot read Geoffrey Chaucer very long without encountering the bubbling, living, and loving human spirit of Chaucer. Everywhere in the poetry of Browning, to him who has learned to see it, there breaks through the radiant light of a great spirit, and the lover of Browning is made conscious of "a Presence, plain in the place." This is the true fellowship of saints. How did we ever acquire the notion that personality ever dies? There are thousands living today who have walked with Browning through long years of "pain, darkness, and cold," and who have come with him out into the open road, feeling his very presence near as they have cried, "I was ever a fighter, so one fight more!" or "I will be patient and proud, and soberly acquiesce."

The fourth thing in knowing Browning has al-

ready been abundantly implied. It is the conduct of life from the high level of Browning's great philosophy. To see with Browning's eyes, to feel with Browning's heart, to strive with Browning's indomitable spirit tramping at your side, that is a fellowship and an experience that many have had. The poet has summed up man's attitude toward life in wondrous form in "La Saisiaz," the poem into which he put so much of his very heart's blood:

Only grant my soul may carry high through death her cup unspilled,
Brimming though it be with knowledge, life's loss drop by drop distilled,
I shall boast it mine—the balsam, bless each kindly wrench that wrung
From life's tree its inmost virtue, tapped the root whence pleasure sprung,
Barked the bole, and broke the bough, and bruised the berry, left all grace
Ashes in death's stern alembic, loosed elixir in its place!

Such an experience of Robert Browning possesses all the elements of a religious experience. But Browning was but a poetic evangelist of Jesus Christ. The basis of his whole philosophy was the sufficiency of Christ for all human life. He might play havoc with every prosy statement of theology, as poets must, but everywhere he exalted and illumined the living Christ.

I see no way of coming at a vital religious experience except by paying, at least, the price that one must pay to know Browning. Our knowledge of Jesus comes to us in the form of written words supplemented by the shouts of approval from men of

many centuries who have tried him and found him true. One must master those words, those forms in which he lies concealed, must advance from the form to the great substance of what he taught, must go on to do his will and somewhere in the process he will stand revealed, a living Presence marching through life at one's side. It is perfectly futile to try, as so many are trying today, to balance against each other the intellectual and the emotional elements in religious experience, or to ransack the body to find the particular cell or nerve in which its origin lies concealed. One might as reasonably hope to discover the living spirit breathing in a great painting, by tearing from the canvas into tiny test-tubes all the delicate tints that the artist used to bare his soul to the world.

There is no sharp line of demarcation between intellect and emotion. There is no such thing as *mere emotion,* and in spite of Immanuel Kant there is no such thing as pure reason. Professor Hocking says that "feeling is a mass of ideas at work." There lies the clue to the experience of religion, about which so many people are in confusion. Putting an idea to work in actual life as well as in the region of thought, is the only way in which a valid faith in that idea can be expressed. Christian faith is following Christ, and in the actual following step by step the totality of Christian experience will emerge.

For some years now earnest men and women, often from the highest level of our cultural life, wearied with the endless discussing and the futilities of the church's theological speculations, have been

asking what Jesus' way of life is. In the new era of spiritual interest this will be the supreme matter. "What shall I do to be saved?" is mankind's question in all centuries. Hell-fire in a future existence no longer, among intelligent people, furnishes the incentive to the leading of a Christian life—it is rather the hell within a man's own breast and in too many places in society today that challenges him. The Kingdom of God will come when men following faithfully the way of Christ, find themselves adjusted, in their inner selves and in their outer relationships, to the will of God.

The revival of interest in religion which I have been writing about in this book will not so much be characterized by great public gatherings, though they will have their place, but will come rather like the spring when, after the sleep of the long winter, life begins to stir and spread everywhere. Dead growths will be sloughed off by the rising tide of renewal—growths like irreverence, moral rebellion, greed, injustice, the passion for power, and all fleshliness—and slowly men will come to revalue life in terms of the enduring spiritual things. In the clatter and clamor of our busy life, when things of the spirit seem utterly remote, there will be found, deep beneath all common and tawdry appearances, a fine sensitiveness to the best values, a more than potential idealism, and, I think, a great thirst for God in all men's hearts. All this the heralds of the new reformation will awaken.

Let me say again at the close of these pages that what I mean by an experience of Christ is a deeply

inner, mystical experience. It is nothing short of an attempt at a cosmic adjustment to spiritual reality as it exists in our universe. It is hard to say this without using unfamiliar terms, but I mean by cosmic adjustment what happens when lungs expand in an atmosphere of oxygen. The forces of nature are cosmic, universal in their presence and activity, and lungs are adaptations by which the energy in the air we breathe becomes available. There you have the universal appropriated in the every-day, concrete business of living. That is as great a mystery and as greatly *mystical* as any religious experience. It is by coming to know Jesus Christ, his words, his meanings, his deeds, his presence, that the adjustment of man to his spiritual environment is effected. As has already been said, the phrase "back to Jesus" is a dubious one. It may mean all that scholarly research which leaves us mere fragments of what he said and did, with the consequent narrowing of his great spiritual character. We cannot fully reconstruct the real spirit of Jesus with these fragments alone. The New Testament reports the impressions which Jesus made on his followers, but on every page is the frank avowal that no words could ever fully portray him. The real character of Jesus is seen in what contact with him did to his disciples. That, in all its revolutionary meaning, could never be described, nor even be arrived at by the most painstaking critical examination of the records. That is exactly the position which Albert Schweitzer has taken. For him it became impossible to reconstruct the historical Jesus. He could not be sure of

all he said and all he did, what kind of a figure he made exactly, in his day, but the study of what evidences were available caused a greater thing than this to happen, namely the arising of Christ " within the heart," which set him upon a career of Christlike service and experience unmatched in our time. Schweitzer greatly shocked Christian sensibilities when he wrote some years ago that the quest of the historical Jesus was a failure and when he declared, moreover, that the discovery of the historical Jesus would be an offense to religion, but how would we respond to a street preacher on a crowded corner telling parables that struck at the foundation of many of our cherished beliefs and institutions? That is what the return of the historical Jesus would be like and there would be many pastors and deacons in the crowd that would cry, " Away with him! "

And what we call the " program of Jesus " is strangely unlike a real program. He had no " program " for a world in which economic injustice was enthroned. He has often been claimed as such, but Jesus was not an agitator, with all his love for the downtrodden. There is abundant reason on the other hand to think that he definitely discouraged attacks upon the existing order. The only institution which Jesus attacked was the existing church of his day and that for the reason that it was failing to function as an organ of spiritual power to men. Inner renewal to Jesus was the prerequisite to outward and social reconstruction. That inner renewal carried with it an immense social dynamic that was destined to produce a line of social revolutionists

even to our own day. Jesus Christ today is a " comrade " in every movement for a better social order.

Nor do we find a distinctive ethical program in the teachings of Jesus. That, too, seems to presuppose an inner, spiritual readjustment. Once a man comes in contact with the real presence of Jesus, finds Christ " arisen within his heart," there needs be no fear of what his conduct may become. The whole message of Jesus is put quite simply in the parable of the Prodigal Son. God is all that a father could be and what a man needs is to " come to himself." When mankind's family relationships are restored, there will come a new world.

Have I been describing a passive, contemplative experience only in what I have just been saying? Does this mystical experience withdraw men from the turbulent stream of life and its threatening currents? Does it put a calm inner state, a glorified egoism, in the first place? Ask Mahatma Ghandi! There you have the mystic and the fighter. Ask any of the men battling valorously today for mankind's greater causes, and they will tell you that only by the incoming of divine power as they hourly seek it in communion with a living God, could they " fight the good fight." It is said of Jesus himself that early in the morning before it was yet day, he departed into a desert place to pray.

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